Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-002
Wednesday
3 January 1996

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-002 *3 January 1996*

CONTENTS

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Yemeni Stance on Eritrean Withdrawal 'Firm' *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 1
Yemeni Ministers Brief House on Eritrean 'Aggression' *[Sanaa Radio]* 1
Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands *[cross-reference]* 1

Inter-Arab Affairs

League Supports Syrian, Lebanese on Peace Talks *[SANA]* 1
League, UN Chiefs Discuss Yemen, Libya, Iraq *[MENA]* 1

Islamic Affairs

Rising Islamic Fundamentalism Viewed *[London THE TIMES 3 Jan]* 2
Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 22 Dec 2
Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 26 Dec 6
Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 26 Dec 10

Palestinian Affairs

Hamas To Accept Legislative Election Results *[Jericho VOP]* 11
Hamas Confirms No Participation in Elections *[Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio]* 11
Candidates Pressured To Withdraw To Favor Quray' *[Jerusalem TV]* 12
3 Islamists Withdraw Nominations 'To Safeguard' Atmosphere *[Jericho VOP]* 12
Abu-Middayn Comments on Israel's Prisoner Release *[AL-QUDS 2 Jan]* 12
Hamas Official on Cairo Talks, Abu-Marzuq *[AL-QUDS 30 Dec]* 13
Ministry Denounces Israeli 'Storming' of Ya'bad *[Jericho VOP]* 14
Israel, Palestinians To Open Gaza-West Bank Road *[Jericho VOP]* 14
PLO, Fatah Officials Return to West Bank *[AL-QUDS 30 Dec]* 15

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israel's Savir: Summit Necessary in Negotiations *[Jerusalem TV]* 15

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

TV Profiles New Prime Minister Ouyahia *[Algiers TV]* 17
Justice, Progress Party Welcome Ouyahia Appointment *[Algiers Radio]* 17
Exiled Islamic Leader: New Prime Minister Changes Nothing *[Paris International]* 17
FIS Escalates Campaign Against GIA *[London AL-HAYAH 29 Dec]* 17
Leader of FIS Armed Wing Reportedly Surrenders *[Paris International]* 18
'Larbaa Battalion' Pulls Out of GIA *[London AL-HAYAH 1 Jan]* 18
Security Forces Eradicate 100 'Terrorists' *[Algiers Radio]* 19
Bread, Oil Prices Set To Increase *[Algiers TV]* 19
Agreements Signed on Debt Rescheduling *[Algiers Radio]* 19

Egypt

Reportage of Sidqi Resignation, al-Janzuri Appointment 19

Sidqi Tenders Resignation Letter *[MENA]* 19
MENA Carries Text of Sidqi's Letter 20
Mubarak Replies to Sidqi's Letter *[MENA]* 20
Mubarak Asks al-Janzuri To Form Cabinet *[MENA]* 21
Mubarak on New Cabinet's Tasks *[MENA]* 21
MENA Profiles al-Janzuri 23
Al-Janzuri Starts Work on New Government *[MENA]* 23
Musa Urges Restraint Between Israel, Lebanon *[MENA]* 23
Sinai Resident Accused of Spying for Israel *[ROSE AL-YUSUF 1 Jan]* 23
Court Imprisons 8 al-Jihad 'Terrorists,' Acquits 12 *[AL-AKHBAR 29 Dec]* 24
Party Leader Interviewed on Election Failure *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 27 Dec]* 24
Islamists Criticize Cairo Stand on Hanish Incident *[London AL-HAYAH 28 Dec]* 25
British Official Comments on Ties, Gulf, Iraq *[MENA]* 25

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi on Clinton, U.S. Policy, Mideast *[Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA 31 Dec]* 25

Mauritania

President Dismisses Prime Minister Boubaker *[AFP]* 27
Khouna Appointed New Prime Minister *[Algiers Radio]* 27
Radio Speculates on Reasons for Boubaker Dismissal *[London International]* 27

Sudan

Al-Bashir Addresses National Congress *[SUNA]* 27
Al-Bashir Gives Go-Ahead for Elections *[Omdurman Radio]* 29
Minister on Elections, Opposition, Eritrea, Hala'ib *[Tehran Radio]* 29
MENA Reports Clashes Between Extremists, Police 30
Government: Refugees Repatriated to Ethiopia *[Omdurman Radio]* 30
Statement Denies Ill-Treatment of Ethiopian Refugees *[Omdurman Radio]* 31
Opposition Radio: Officials Seeking British Asylum *[Voice of Sudan National Democratic Alliance]* 31
Libyan Armed Forces Chief Arrives in Khartoum *[JANA]* 31
Received by First Vice President *[Omdurman Radio]* 31

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Demonstrations, Clashes Continue for Fifth Day *[Tehran International]* 33

Kuwait

Minister Against Proposed Security Center in Cairo *[KUNA]* 33
Prime Minister Conveys Good Wishes to King Fahd *[KUNA]* 33

Saudi Arabia

Ma'sari: 'Abdallah 'Not as Pro-American as Fahd' *[Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA 2 Jan]* 34
Crown Prince Receives Eritrean Minister *[Riyadh Radio]* 34
National Deficit 'Nearly Halved' in 1995 *[AFP]* 34
Finance Ministry Statement on Coming Fiscal Year *[SPA]* 35
Al-'Attar: Budget Reflects 'Wise Policy' of King *[SPA]* 36
Royal Decrees Issued on Budget *[SPA]* 37

United Arab Emirates

UK Defense Secretary Portillo Arrives for Visit 39

Received by Defense Minister al-Maktum *[Abu Dhabi Radio]* 39
Portillo: Countries Close to Defense Pact *[AFP]* 40
Paper Views Portillo's Visit Negatively *[Tehran International]* 40

IRAQ

'High-Level' Iranian Delegation Visits Kurdistan 42
Delegation's Agenda Reported *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 42
Iranian Envoy Meets Barzani *[Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan]* 42
Barzani Praises 'Positive' Talks *[IRNA]* 42
IRNA Reports Delegation's Visit 42
Delegation Visits Towns Bordering Turkey *[IRNA]* 43
Kurdish Ulema Urge Iran To Aid Peace Efforts *[IRNA]* 43
Iran Vows Continued Efforts To End Fighting *[IRNA]* 43
Ministry Condemns 'Official' Iranian Visit to North *[Baghdad TV]* 43
PUK Cites KDP Cease-Fire Violations in Kurdistan *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 44
UN Official on Agreement in PKK-KDP Talks *[London TV]* 44
Army Troops, Kurdish Area Residents Reportedly Clash *[Voice of the People of Kurdistan]* 44
Government 'Saboteurs' Arrested in Kurdistan *[Voice of Iraqi People]* 45
Saddam Chairs Ba'th Party Command Meeting *[Baghdad TV]* 45
'Udayy's Chairmanship of Groups Expires *[AL-THAWRAH 17 Dec]* 45
Opposition Says General, Driver Die in Ambush *[AFP]* 45

ISRAEL

Beilin on Syrian Talks; Savir Urges European Aid *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 46
Push for Early Elections Said Dependent on Syria *[Jerusalem TV]* 47
Peres Denies Asking U.S. for Money, Weapons *[Jerusalem Radio]* 47
Shin Bet Chief on PA's Handling of 'Terrorists' *[IDF Radio]* 47
IDF in Guerrilla War Training for South Lebanon *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 1 Jan]* 48
IDF Plans, Document on Redeployment Reported *[HA'ARETZ 1 Jan]* 49
Peres Orders Release of Suspected Russian Mafioso *[VESTI 3 Jan]* 50
Rabin Camp Absent From Peres' Favored Candidates *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 3 Jan]* 50
Poll: Peres, Labor Leading Netanyahu, Likud *[Jerusalem TV]* 51
Ministry Approves East Jerusalem Voters List *[GOVERNMENT PRESS OFFICE]* 51
Ministers Refuse To Sign Secrecy Statement *[Jerusalem Radio]* 51

JORDAN

Israeli Foreign Minister Baraq Continues Visit 52
Meets With King, Addresses Press *[Amman Radio]* 52
Further on News Conference *[Amman TV]* 52
Meets With al-Kabariti, Comments *[Amman Radio]* 53
King Confirms Iraqi Opposition Conference Plans *[Tel Aviv Radio]* 54
Prime Minister on Iraq, Unions, Other Issues *[AL-DUSTUR 3 Jan]* 54
Al-Kabariti on Relations With Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt *[AL-HADATH 3 Jan]* 56
Husayn Kamil Congratulates King on New Year *[PETRA-JNA]* 56
King Expects No Change in Saudi Policy, Relations *[JORDAN TIMES 3 Jan]* 57
New Foreign Investment Law Outlined *[JORDAN TIMES 1 Jan]* 57
Interrogation Methods Questioned in Sabotage Case *[JORDAN TIMES 1 Jan]* 58
Minister Denies Curbs on Public Freedoms, Democracy *[JORDAN TIMES 30 Dec]* 58

LEBANON

Al-Hariri on Peace Stance, Unity With Syria *[Beirut Radio]* 60

Speaker: Current Tensions 'Result of Occupation' *[Beirut Radio]* 60
Dallul Stresses Resistance Against 'Malicious' Enemy *[Beirut Radio]* 60
5 Soldiers Released From al-Khiyam Prison *[Beirut Radio]* 60

SYRIA

Upcoming Christopher Tour, Ross Remarks Reported *[Damascus Radio]* 61
Union Head Opposed to Normalization With Israel *[AL-MAJD 1 Jan]* 61
Radio: Evaluation of Israeli Stand in Talks 'Premature' *[Damascus Radio]* 61
Press Commends States' Support for Peace Stand *[Damascus Radio]* 62
Radio: World Peoples Look Forward to 'Coexistence' *[Damascus Radio]* 63
Radio: Measures Must Accompany Good Intentions *[Damascus Radio]* 64
Press on Expectations for 2d Round of Peace Talks *[Damascus Radio]* 64
Paper Urges Eritrea To Withdraw Forces From Island *[Damascus Radio]* 65

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Rabbani Said Not To Mention Power Transfer *[Message of Freedom]* 67
Opposition Proposes Talks on Rabbani Replacement *[IRNA]* 67
Dostam Refuses To Welcome Rabbani as President *[Message of Freedom]* 67
Hekmatyar Refuses To Meet Rabbani Envoy in Jalalabad *[Message of Freedom]* 68
Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami Leader Talks With Minister *[Tehran International]* 68
Coordination Council Said Ready for Peace Talks *[IRNA]* 68
Iran Said Trying To Reconcile Political Entities *[Message of Freedom]* 69
Hekmatyar Gives News Conference on Current Policies *[Message of Freedom]* 69
Three Rabbani Commanders Defect to Hezb-e Eslami *[Message of Freedom]* 69
Taleban Leaders Hold Meeting With Paktia Elders *[Message of Freedom]* 70
Rabbani Chairs High State Council Meeting *[Kabul Radio]* 70
Islamic Unity Party Denies Rabbani Released POWs *[Message of Freedom]* 70
Rocket Attack Kills 20, Injures 48 in Kabul *[AFP]* 70
Kabul Government Bombs Taleban in Maydanshar *[Message of Freedom]* 71

Bangladesh

Train Services Disrupted Due to Blockade *[Dhaka Radio]* 71
Progress Seen in Efforts To End Political Impasse *[JANAKANTHA 25 Dec]* 71
Commission 'Partially' Revises Election Schedule *[Dhaka Radio]* 72
Directive To Maintain Order During Elections *[Dhaka Radio]* 72
Party To Participate in Parliamentary Elections *[Dhaka Radio]* 73
Muslim League Asks Parties To Join Elections *[Dhaka Radio]* 73
BNP Waiting for Agreement on 'Advisory Council' *[THE DAILY STAR 24 Dec]* 73

India

Three Killed in Bomb Explosion in Central Delhi *[Delhi Radio]* 73
Kashmiri 'Militant Outfit' Claims Credit *[Delhi Radio]* 74
'Pakistan-Trained Militants' Killed in Kashmir *[Delhi Radio]* 74
Army Recovers 150 Kgs of Explosives in Kashmir *[Delhi TV]* 74
Rao Cancels Punjab Trip; Assassination Threat Denied *[AFP]* 74
Rao Announces Package To Resolve Water Dispute *[Delhi Radio]* 74
Pakistan's Refusal of Visas for Team Criticized *[Delhi Radio]* 75
Editorial Ponders Bhutto's Offer of Kashmir Talks *[THE PIONEER 2 Jan]* 75
Economy Seen as 'Healthier But Not Blooming' *[THE TIMES OF INDIA 1 Jan]* 76

Iran

Effigies of Clinton, Gingrich Burned at Rally *[IRNA]* 77

Public Said To Want Boycott of U.S.-Made Goods *[IRNA]* 77
Velayati Protests to OIC on U.S. Actions *[Tehran TV]* 77
Fadlallah Criticizes U.S. Decision Against Country *[Tehran International]* 78
Emami-Kashani on U.S. 'Hostility' to Iran *[Tehran Radio]* 78
Commentary on Reaction to U.S. 'Policies' *[Tehran Radio]* 79
Government Urged To Respond to 'Divisive' U.S. Move *[RESALAT 18 Dec]* 80
U.S. Policies Said To Stem From Hostility to Islam *[Tehran Radio]* 81
Dailies Comment on U.S. 'Hostile Policies' *[IRNA]* 81
Tehran To Reinforce Support for Islamic Jihad *[AL-URDUN 1 Jan]* 82
Habibi, Velayati To Visit Syria 'Shortly' *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 82
'Possibility' of Cooperation With Russia on Defense *[Tehran Radio]* 83
Velayati Warns Against Partitioning Iraq *[IRNA]* 83
King Husayn's Proposal for Iraq Criticized *[IRNA]* 83
Radio Reports Demonstrations in Bahrain *[Tehran Radio]* 84
Damascus Declaration Statement Called 'Lackluster' *[Tehran Radio]* 84
Paper Calls Turkish Election 'Turning Point' *[SALAM 26 Dec]* 84
Commentary Views Transfer of Power in Saudi Arabia *[Tehran Radio]* 85
UN Human Rights Resolution 'Politically Motivated' *[TEHRAN TIMES 24 Dec]* 86
Kazakh Diplomat on Trade Cooperation With Country *[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN ECONOMIC WEEKLY 23 Dec]* 86
Doha Talks Prelude To Ending 'Misunderstanding' *[IRNA]* 88
'Satanic' Plans Said Behind Gulf Territorial Claims *[JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI 18 Dec]* 88
Commentary Views U.S. Aid to Egypt *[Tehran International]* 89
Majles Election Campaign To Start 29 Feb *[IRNA]* 89
Official Says Competent Candidates Should Run *[TEHRAN TIMES 26 Dec]* 90
Jannati Comments on Upcoming Elections Criticized *[SALAM 17 Dec]* 90
Paper Cites Raja'i-Khorasani on Elections *[ABRAR 24 Dec]* 91
Deputy Announces 'Independent' Islamic Party *[ABRAR 24 Dec]* 92

Pakistan

Senate Committee Views Possible Indian Nuclear Test *[Islamabad Radio]* 92
Bhutto Announces Reward for Arrest of 'Terrorist' *[Islamabad Radio]* 92
Indian 'Harassment' of Kashmiri Leaders Seen *[Islamabad TV]* 93
'Dreaded Terrorist' Arrested in Karachi *[Delhi Radio]* 93
Further on Arrest *[THE NATION 30 Dec]* 93
India's RAW Suspected of Arming Bangladeshi Separatists *[THE NEWS 29 Dec]* 93
More on Spokesman's Foreign Policy Briefing *[THE NEWS 29 Dec]* 94
Criticism of Police Work on Peshawar Bombing Reported *[KHABRAIN 31 Dec]* 95
MYC Leader: Strike Move To Change Government *[THE NATION 30 Dec]* 96
Strike Call 'Flop' *[Islamabad TV]* 96
MQM Senators Accuse Bhutto of Genocide *[AMN 16 Dec]* 97

Sri Lanka

President Delivers New Year's Message *[DAILY NEWS 1 Jan]* 98
LTTE Dispatch Confirms Offer of Foreign-Brokered Talks *[TAMIL EELAM NEWS WWW 31 Dec]* 100
Analysts View LTTE Offer To Resume Peace Talks *[Colombo International]* 100
President Seeks Tamil Help in Rehabilitation *[Colombo International]* 100
LTTE Militants Reportedly Lose Faith in Leadership *[Colombo International]* 101
Tamil Tigers Fire Mortars To Mark New Year *[AFP]* 101
Troops Beat Off 'Massive' Attack by Tigers *[AFP]* 102
Tamil Rebels Call For Support From India *[DAILY NEWS 3 Jan]* 102
Official on Measures To Resolve Ethnic Problem *[Colombo International]* 103

Government Commitment to Human Rights Stressed *[Colombo International]* 103
Government Sends 'New Year Bonanza' to Jaffna *[LANKAPUVATH 31 Dec]* 104
Sivathasan Appointed as Presidential Adviser *[LANKAPUVATH 3 Jan]* 104

Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict

Yemeni Stance on Eritrean Withdrawal 'Firm'

JN0201174296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yemen still adheres to its conditions for holding talks with Eritrea on the al-Hanish al-Kabir island, which was occupied by Eritrean forces in mid-December. Reacting to Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki's statement, an official Yemeni spokesman today said that the Yemeni stand is firm. The Yemeni stand, the spokesman added, is based on Eritrean withdrawal from al-Hanish al-Kabir island and on returning everything to the situation that prevailed prior to 15 December, before holding any talks on maritime borders. Despite this, the Yemeni spokesman said, Yemen will continue to give the peaceful option and good will a chance.

Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki announced that Yemen's demand for the withdrawal of the Eritrean Army from al-Hanish al-Kabir island before starting any negotiations between the two sides is an impossible condition. [passage omitted]

Yemeni Ministers Brief House on Eritrean 'Aggression'

JN3012180395 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The House of Representatives held its first session of the current term under House of Representatives Speaker Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar today.

During this session, people's representatives were briefed by Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, deputy prime minister and foreign minister; and Staff Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Malik al-Sayyani, defense minister, on the treacherous Eritrean aggression against the Yemeni al-Hanish al-Kabir. [passage omitted]

Eritrean Coverage of Conflict Over Islands

WA2012150095

For further reportage of the Eritrean-Yemeni confrontation over the Hanish Islands in the Red Sea, including official Eritrean Foreign Ministry statements, please see the East Africa section of the 19 December Sub-Saharan Africa DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Inter-Arab Affairs

League Supports Syrian, Lebanese on Peace Talks

JN0201183696 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1800 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 jan (SANA)—The Arab League today expressed support for the just Syrian and Lebanese demands and for the implementation of resolutions of international legitimacy, particularly Resolutions 242, 338, and 425 which call on Israel to withdraw from all occupied Arab territories.

Commenting today on the resumption of the second round of the Syrian-Israeli negotiations near Washington tomorrow, Muwaffaq al-'Allaf, Arab League assistant secretary general said: We hope that these talks will achieve their anticipated objective—namely, full Israeli withdrawal from all the 1967 occupied territories.

He added: It is still premature to confirm anything. We should wait to see what will happen. What counts are the results of the talks.

Al-'Allaf said: Syria joined the negotiations at the Madrid conference. However, the Israeli policy refused to reach the anticipated objective of the peace process—namely, the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

He stressed: The Arab League believes implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy on all the negotiating tracks is the only way to realize peace and attain security in the region. Based on this, the Arab League supports the Syrian and Lebanese stands.

League, UN Chiefs Discuss Yemen, Libya, Iraq

NC0301104996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1005 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 3 Jan (MENA)—Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid and UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali reviewed current regional and international issues in a meeting at Arab League headquarters today. Among the issues raised were the Yemeni-Eritrean crisis and UN efforts to contain it peacefully through dialogue.

The two officials also discussed ways to alleviate the effects of the embargo on the Iraqi people, the Libyan-Western crisis, and Somalia. They also discussed ways to strengthen relations between the Arab League and the United Nations.

Butrus-Ghali's visit to the Arab League is the first by a UN secretary general.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Islamic Affairs

Rising Islamic Fundamentalism Viewed

MS0301103896 London THE TIMES in English 3 Jan 96 p 13

[Report on interview with leading Egyptian author Muhammad Haykal by Richard Owen: "Middle East Threatened With 'Mutiny and Revolt'"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A leading Arab intellectual has delivered a warning that, despite Israeli-Arab peace moves, the Middle East faces an explosion of social and economic discontent.

Muhammad Haykal, who advised both President Nasir and President Sadat of Egypt, and is a former editor of the Cairo daily AL-AHRAM, said the Middle East could "explode in mutiny and revolt ... All the elements of a storm are gathering".

Mr Haykal was imprisoned briefly by Sadat for his criticism of Egyptian policy after the 1973 Middle East War, and later caused controversy with his 1992 book ILLUSIONS OF TRIUMPH, in which he argued that the Allied victory over Iraq in the Gulf War would exacerbate tensions between the West and the Arab world in the long run.

In his latest polemic, SECRET CHANNELS, he argues that the Israeli-Palestinian accords amount to an "unjust peace" comparable with Versailles after the First World War. Every Middle East initiative has been based on finding a way for the Arabs to surrender with a figleaf of dignity," Mr Haykal said. "The peace of Oslo maximised Israeli gains. The Palestinians did not get an independent state, nor did they get any control over Jerusalem. I do not think the deal will survive for long."

The danger to Middle East stability stems mainly, Mr Haykal argues, from the failure of Arab leaders to solve economic and social tensions in their own countries. "The rulers of the Arab world have all been in power too long," he said. "The youngest of them — Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi of Libya — has been at the helm for 26 years. Yet 60 per cent of the Arab population is below the age of 18. So here you have an explosive mix: permanence of power at the top, and social and economic turbulence underneath."

Mr Haykal pointed to Saudi Arabia, where the stroke suffered by King Fahd a month ago led this week to a "temporary" transfer of power to his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdallah. The real threat to the King, he said, stemmed not from Islamic hotheads but from the growing middle class, which was created by Saudi wealth and now resents the all-pervasive control of the Royal Family. "They want a share of power, and do not accept the monopoly of all wealth and political decisions by the House of Saud."

He also singled out Egypt, where there are nearly two million unemployed graduates, some of whom turn to radical Islam for support and ideas. "It is no accident that Islamic fundamentalism thrives in the poorest areas and feeds on deprivation. If you are a young Arab, if you become educated, return to your village and find no work, naturally you become radical. In the past you might have become a communist: nowadays you become an Islamic fundamentalist.

The answer, Mr Haykal said, lay in economic reform, which would give Arabs back their pride and identity and so undercut the appeal of radical Islam. "Once we had Egyptian leadership and Gulf money; now we have neither. Before the Gulf War there was at least the semblance of Arab unity of Arab nationslism.

Now even that is gone. There is a dearth of ideas."

Some Arab leaders have tried to meet the Islamic challenge. "One-third of Egyptian television programmes are religious. But you cannot fight the shaykhs this way: they will always win. They know better than the people on television. All you do is to create an atmosphere in which they advance further."

Anti-Islamic propaganda is ineffective, and police crack-downs have only limited impact, "because what we are witnessing is not really a religious revolt at all, but a social and economic one. Arab leaders must tackle the sources of poverty on which fundamentalism feeds."

Western democracy was not the answer, he said — or, rather, empty imitations of Western institutions like the rubber-stamp Saudi "Consultative Council". "As far as I know it has met twice. It was done to satisfy the West that Saudi Arabia was reforming democratically. Democracy in the British or European sense is a luxury for us Arabs. Democracy cannot function until we have social justice and economic development."

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 22 Dec

NC3012104795

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 22 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Opposition Steps Up Efforts To Bring Down Parliament.
2. Judicial Investigation of Election Demanded.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

3. Israeli-Eritrean Deal Said Behind Island Dispute.
4. Election-Related Detainees Released.
5. Court To Pass Verdict in Trial of Editor.
6. U.S.-Israeli Plan To Form North African Grouping Viewed.
7. Journalists Relate Election-Rigging Stories.
8. Obscenity At Cairo Film Festival Deplored.
9. Official Reacts To President's Threats Against Labor Party.
10. Sedition Feared in Lebanon.
11. American Inmates Convert To Islam.
12: Archbishop of Canterbury Writes on Islam, Christianity.

OPPOSITION STEPS UP EFFORTS TO BRING DOWN PARLIAMENT

Leaders of the opposition parties and political forces, in a meeting held at the Wafd Party headquarters on 19 December, decided to set up a permanent committee to "confront election-rigging" and coordinate efforts in their quest to "bring down" the parliament, writes Mahmud Bakri in an approximately 600-word report on pages 1 and 8. The opposition leaders also decided to maintain coordination among the opposition papers to highlight reports and views exposing the government's irregularities during the elections and rejecting the "unlawful" parliament. The leaders said that "aggression against any opposition party is deemed an aggression against all parties." The opposition leaders discussed proposals to establish a "national front" and hold a "massive political rally" grouping representatives of all parties, political forces, and individuals concerned about democracy in Egypt, adds Bakri. They also decided to organize actions taken by their legal representatives to follow up on lawsuits filed to bring down the parliament. The meeting was attended by Labor Party Chairman Ibrahim Shukri, Wafd Party Chairman Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din, Nasirite party Chairman Diya'-al-Din Dawud, Liberal Party Chairman Mustafa Kamil Murad, National Progressive Unionist Grouping Secretary General Dr. Rif'at al-Sa'id, Muslim Brotherhood Deputy Guide Ma'mun al-Hudaybi, and Ibrahim Badrawi, representing the Communists.

JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION OF ELECTION DEMANDED

An approximately 300-word report by 'Abd-al-Fattah Fayid on pages 1 and 8 notes that former People's Assembly member Jalal Gharib has presented a memorandum to the Higher Judicial Council, the highest judicial body in the country, demanding an investigation into cases of election-rigging in which a "large number" of judges were involved. Gharib, who ran as an independent candidate in al-Minufiyah in the last election, pointed out in his memorandum that the judge supervising elections in his constituency ignored his "official complaints" that proved irregularities, a scenario repeated in most constituencies where opposition and independent candidates were running. In his memo, Gharib noted that ballots were seen in the hands of children and that ballot boxes in villages where National Democratic Party candidates were running had been fully "stuffed" in their favor with armed force.

ISRAELI-ERITREAN DEAL SAID BEHIND ISLAND DISPUTE

An approximately 600-word report by Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah on pages 1 and 8 cites "Arab diplomatic sources" as saying that Eritrean Government troops and "Israeli mercenaries" have jointly attacked and occupied the Yemeni Red Sea island of al-Hanish. He adds that the attack is part of a "deal between Eritrea and Israel to wrest control of the Bab el-Mandeb from the Arab states in favor of Israel in return for Israel's help to the Eritreans in extracting petroleum, which studies have proved to exist on the island." The deal also involves economic and military aid to Eritrean as well as an Israeli-Eritrean "protocol for military cooperation" to "protect Eritrean from any aggression," the writer adds. 'Arafah adds that according to Yemeni military officials, the Eritrean attacking forces was led by an Israeli pilot with the rank of lieutenant colonel named (Michael Duma) and that the Israeli troops who have been present on islands named (Hawsh al-Kubra) and (Hawsh al-Sughra) since the seventies provided "direct support" to the Eritrean invading troops. The report adds that Israel succeeded in the seventies in occupying some of these "uninhabited" islands, where it set up "advanced radar systems." The report quotes a Yemeni diplomat as saying that Israeli weapons, including boats, were used in the invasion and that communications between the Eritrean attacking troops were in Hebrew. The report notes that Yemen seems to be edging toward a diplomatic solution for the conflict, in view of the "direct Israeli involvement" which it cannot match and following U.S. warnings not to permit Yemeni military operations to obstruct international navigation in this vital waterway, something which suggests that the Americans may be backing the Eritrean- Israeli plan.

In a related report, Ahmad al-Siyufi, in an approximately 1,500- word article on page 7, repeats the allegations about Israel's involvement in the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute and notes that Eritrean President Isayas Afewerki has for long been "groomed" to act as a "spearhead" of all Israeli and Zionist operations in Africa and the Horn of Africa. Al-Siyufi adds that Afewerki's troops have received training in Israel, which also supplied Eritrea

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

with "extremely advanced" weapons. He refers to the Eritrean leader's "conspiratorial" role against Islam, as demonstrated by his support of the Sudanese opposition's bid to topple the Sudanese regime through military operations proceeding from Eritrea. The writer adds that the Eritrean attack sought to weaken Yemen and push it toward reconciliation with Israel which, through Eritrean control of the three Red Sea disputed islands, would be in a position to "control trade and economy in the region."

ELECTION-RELATED DETAINEES RELEASED.

An approximately 200-word report on page 1 by 'Ala' al-Bahhar notes that the Interior Ministry has made a decision to release "hundreds of detainees" arrested during the recent People's Assembly elections. In the village of Kirdasah alone, 860 people have been released. They were detained during demonstrations in the first and second rounds of elections, he adds. The report notes that more than 1,500 people belonging to the "Islamic current" were detained by the Interior Ministry before and during the elections, of whom some were detained for 30 days, others were jailed in connection with pending legal cases, and others were kept without charges.

COURT TO PASS VERDICT IN TRIAL OF EDITOR

A court trying AL-SHA'B Chief Editor Majdi Husayn in a libel lawsuit filed by the son of Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi has decided to give its verdict on the case, writes an approximately 300-word unattributed report on page 1. The report does not give a date for the expected court ruling. The editor's defense called for the dismissal of the case based on the Higher Constitutional Court's ruling on the unconstitutionality of Article 195, which holds chief editors accountable for what is written in their papers. The defense also pleaded that Law 93 of 1995, according to which the editor is being tried, is unconstitutional, on the grounds that it was passed by parliament in the absence of the required quorum. However, the court ignored the defense pleas, the report adds.

U.S.-ISRAELI PLAN TO FORM NORTH AFRICA GROUPING VIEWED

Israel and the United States are said to be preparing a joint plan to set up an "economic grouping in North Africa" that represents the nucleus for regional economic cooperation in the Middle East, an unattributed 400-word report on pages 1 and 8 notes. The report adds that Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia have been approached to join the grouping, which would also include Israel, some European countries, and some African countries with U.S. participation. The grouping seeks to link the economy of Arab and African states with that of Israel and the United States. The United States is said to have offered the grouping "all types of technology" needed for development in various domains. The grouping would gain favorable treatment in customs and trade from European states, the report adds.

JOURNALISTS RELATED ELECTION-RIGGING STORIES

On page 3, Khalid Yunus writes an approximately 3,000-word article on a seminar organized by the Freedoms Committee of the Press Syndicate in which journalists who had run in the recent parliamentary elections spoke about the "flagrant" rigging and "criminal" measures used by the government to "falsify the nation's will." The journalists called for the formation of a national front representing all political parties and forces to confront the government's onslaught on "public freedoms." The journalists expected 1996 to witness more "suppression of freedoms" and tough measures against the government and the freedom of the press. Journalist Salah 'Isa noted that the election events "signal the end of the regime" and that the muffling of freedoms is ultimately bound to result in a "conflagration."

Speaking at the seminar, Syndicate Deputy Chairman Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus, who ran in the Cairo district of Bulaq, stressed that "democracy under the exclusion of a certain current or power, such as the Islamic current, cannot work, for preventing a single power from exercising its political rights means preventing all powers." Noting that Copts as well as the Muslim Brothers were discriminated against in the elections, 'Abd-al-Quddus adds that "these days resemble the events of 1979, when al-Sadat started to strike at the opposition forces until he met his fateful doom", adding that this regime is walking "Al-Sadat's path." 'Abd-al-Quddus expected more military trials and violations of human rights and press freedoms in 1996, including the "closure" of AL-SHA'B.

OBSCENITY AT CAIRO FILM FESTIVAL DEPLORED.

Khalid Abu-Jalalah, in an approximately 2,000-word article on page 4, deplores the screening of "obscene" films in public movie theaters as part of the 1995 Cairo Film Festival. A raid against Cairo movie theaters by the Vice Squad resulted in the confiscation of a number of movies marked "D", a category of films licensed to be screened to critics and journalists only, not the public. In addition, the writer adds, pamphlets and brochures depicting "sexually obscene" pictures were openly sold before theaters showing the festival films. The pictures have nothing to do with the films on display but are

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

taken from "pornographic" magazines, the writer adds. The writer notes that the only "credit" about which the festival director boasts; namely the ban on the participation of Israel in the festival, will not "prevent us from saying yes to the cinema but no to obscenity and Israel together."

OFFICIAL REACTS TO PRESIDENT'S THREATS AGAINST LABOR PARTY

Labor Party Secretary General 'Adil Husayn continues his comments on the Egyptian parliamentary elections in an approximately 4,500- word article on page 5. He notes that this time, like previous times, the elections were rigged, but the only thing different about this time is that people have seen it for themselves and not read about it in the opposition papers only. Addressing the regime, Husayn adds: There is no point for you to deny what you have committed, because you are known to the people to be "forgers and corrupt," so what harm could there be in adding that you are "liars" too?

Turning to President Mubarak's speech at the opening of the new parliament, Husayn notes that the president surprisingly avoided any reference to any mistakes during the elections, despite the court rulings annulling the results of some elections and reports about wide-scale irregularities. Noting that the president spoke at length about the merits of democracy, Husayn adds: "Allow me Mr. president to tell you that the nation did not want to hear an academic lecture about the concept of democracy and parties. The nation was looking forward to a political speech analyzing the reasons for the current crisis in our democratic progress." Husayn notes that Mubarak's speech hinted that Egypt's current "crisis" in the field of "democratic transformation" was the fault the Labor Party. Citing Mubarak's remarks that some parties have turned their papers into pulpits for inciting violence and terrorism and for echoing the voices of external forces, Husayn writes: "As for inciting terrorism, we dare [you to find] a single Labor Party leader writing a word or making a statement that smacks of incitement or a call for armed violence. Had this happened, the regime would not have hesitated to put us on trial." Husayn instead accused the regime of inciting "armed violence in our political lives," as demonstrated by the unprecedented outbreak of "armed opposition" against the government nowadays. He points out that it does not take violence by the Labor Party or other parties to change you, for "free elections are enough to bring you down without violence or blood." After noting that the president's "accusations" against the Labor Party are "groundless" and after referring to Mubarak's reference to take legal measures against such parties, Husayn adds: "Thus, what we have at hand is not a political analysis but an explicit threat to use force against the Labor Party, whether by means of dissolving the party, shutting down its newspaper, arresting a number of its leaders, or all of these measures combined." He notes that the reference to legal measures in the president's speech does not hide the threat, which "reminds us of former President Anwar al-Sadat's threats to his opponents," because the existing laws are specifically enacted to protect "despotism." Husayn adds: "It seems that the president wanted to set the political stage to implement his threats against the Labor Party, for he made friendly remarks to the other opposition parties to side with him in his war against our party." After doubting this possibility, Husayn asks: "Can any sane person believe that the president will strike at the Labor Party because it is a party that encourages terrorism and backs Sudan? If it is indeed a war against terrorism, is this a sudden discovery? What has suddenly come up to prove against us what has not been proved in years? Our positions have always been stable and made public, so what is new? Why choose the present time to strike at the Labor Party? The only explanation is that the government is retreating from democratic gains one step after another. After striking at the Brotherhood, its next step (and certainly not the last) is to strike at the Labor Party." He asks: "Can there be any talk about a democratic progress in our region that ignores the Islamic current?" He notes that if the regime is bothered by the ongoing dialogue in Algeria to establish "bridges" with the Islamic current, and if it fails to see the significance in Syria's release of Islamic detainees as well as the results of the Turkish elections, this is its own "business." However, he adds, "all the democratic forces" will not accept the combating of the "reform-oriented Islamic tendency" under the name of combating terrorism or deepening democracy. He points out that the recent elections have revealed the government's "malignant scheme" to divide the opposition into "Islamists" and "non- Islamists," but it foolishly revealed its intentions too soon by making almost all the oppositionists as well as Copts lose the election. Referring to a meeting of leaders of the opposition parties, Husayn notes that the parties declared that any aggression against any party is considered an aggression against them all. Concluding, Husayn tells the regime: "All the Islamic and democratic forces will not be scared by your threats."

SEDITION FEARED IN LEBANON

Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah, in an approximately 600-word column on page 7, fears renewed sedition among Christians and Muslims in Lebanon as a result of the "frenzied" stands taken by officials from both sides. He notes that the recommendations of a Vatican-

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

sponsored synod on Lebanon calling on Syria to pull out its troops from Lebanon and expressing concern about Lebanon's multicultural identity have aroused the concern of both Sunni and Shiite Muslims, who rejected the absence of any reference to Israel's occupation of the south from the synod's recommendations. The recommendations were seen as a threat deepening the "sectarian differences" in the country, the writer adds.

Another cause of tension, the writers adds, is the demands by the Islamic Group led by Fathi Yakan to give schools days off on Friday and Sunday, not Saturday and Sunday as is the case now, to give Muslim students the chance to perform Friday prayers. The Education Ministry rejected the demand, which was backed by Hizballah and other Islamic leaders in the country, the writer adds. As a result, the Islamic Group announced that it would stage demonstrations to close the schools by force on Friday, thus heightening the tension in the country, he adds.

AMERICAN INMATES CONVERT TO ISLAM

An unattributed 300-word report on page 7 cites statistics by the American-Islamic Council as saying that 22,000 U.S. inmates convert to Islam every year. In the past 10 years, approximately 200,000 American inmates have converted to Islam inside American jails. The writer adds that blacks make up a high percentage of converts, adding that prison administrations encourage this trend, which makes inmates more peaceful and organized.

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY WRITES ON ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY

Archbishop of Canterbury George Carey writes an approximately 3,000-word article on Christian-Islamic dialogue on page 9. In his article, contributed to AL-SHA'B, Carey notes that Christianity and Islam, the world's biggest religions, have made glorious contributions to mankind. However, he adds, this bright picture has a "dark side." For these same religions that possess the power to bring people together have "divided" people, such as the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, the struggle between Islam and Christianity in the Middle Ages have cast dark shadows on relations between the two religions. He adds: "No Christian in our time feels satisfied by the way in which our ancestors have settled past conflicts. The Crusaders have caused adverse effects in inter-Christian relations and in their relations with Muslims, and there are many things for which we apologize." Carey points out that the "dark side" of religion shows up in those parts of the world where the "calm and sane voice of faith" is being overpowered by the shouts of "fanaticism and ignorance." As a result, "violence and murder replaces frank dialogue and civilized conduct," he adds. To offset this trend, Carey suggests "friendship instead of enmity; understanding instead of ignorance, openness instead of isolation, and cooperation instead of confrontation."

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 26 Dec

NC0101085196

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 26 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Turkish Welfare Party's Election Success Welcomed
2. Dispute Over Challenged Election Results Continues
3. Hamas Delegation Denied Permission To Meet With Brotherhood
4. Embassy Denies Cuban Experts Sent to Sudan
5. Chief Editor Links Red Sea Dispute to Government 'Follies'
6. Rail Disaster Blamed on Government Negligence
7. Writer Promises 'Counterfeit' Parliament Will Be Toppled
8. Labor Party Leader Says Public Supports Opposition
9. Political System Reproached, Brotherhood Praised
10. Labor's Shukri Congratulates Catholics on Christmas

TURKISH WELFARE PARTY'S ELECTION SUCCESS WELCOMED

This issue's banner headline on page 1 is: "Democracy Confirms its Triumph in Turkey." The paper's lead story, supported by other reports and comments on page 8, is about the Turkish Welfare Party's emergence as the biggest winner in Turkey's parliamentary elections.

The 400-word report on page 1 says that Egyptian Television, reflecting the Egyptian Government's displeasure with the results, reported falsely that Tansu Ciller's True Path Party had won the largest number of seats even after the final count had been announced by other media.

AL-SHA'B says: "Turkish President Suleyman Demirel had expected such an outcome and tried to circumvent it in advance by declaring that he is not obliged to ask the party with the highest score to form the government, meaning that, to keep the Islamist party from governing, he will now try to form a government from the second and third place parties, the Motherland Party and True Path Party. They are secular pro-Western parties who together won around 40 percent of the seats. This would contravene democratic conventions."

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

AL-SHA'B'S report continues: "Regardless of the expected maneuvers against the Islamist stream, the elections were a new testimony that democracy in Turkey is stable. The outcome was also a new slap in the face of Egypt's rulers."

On page 8, a 600-word report based on a telephone dispatch by the paper's Ankara correspondent Ahmad al-Suyufi, is given the headline: "God is Great... The Islamic Welfare Party Has Come First in Turkey in the Most Honest Elections in the East."

Al-Suyufi's report expects Welfare Party leader Necmittin Erbakan to form the new Turkish government and compares Tansu Ciller's appeal to the electorate not to elect the Welfare Party to the Byzantine Emperor's futile appeal to the Pope to save him when the Ottoman Sultan Mohammed II [AL-SHA'B's report refers to him as Mohammed V] besieged Constantinople.

A 2,400-word analysis on the same page by Dr. Ahmad Shawqi Hammad analyzes the factors that led to the Welfare Party's success and concludes that "the political grassroots" will become increasingly Islamic and that if the Welfare Party does not form a government this time, it will form the next one as Turkey goes into the 21st century.

A 500-word article by Mahfuz 'Azzam on page 6 says that Turkey's Welfare Party could have swept the other political parties off the scene in the recent elections but chose self-restraint to avoid a military coup d'etat like the one that happened in 1980. The Welfare Party, 'Azzam says, knows that "Europe, the new world order, and the Turkish Army officers who were nurtured at the new world order's table will not allow Islamic rule to return to Turkey with such speed."

Recalling that Welfare Party leader Erbakan was previously jailed but made a political comeback after serving his term, the writer asks: "Can the events in Turkey be viewed as a precedent that can be repeated in Egypt? Will Muslim leaders and thinkers come out of jail and stop being tried by military tribunals to assume their natural role of leading the Egyptian people? When that happens it will not benefit the Egyptian rulers to claim that Egypt is different than Turkey as they said before that Egypt is not like Algeria."

The commentator concludes: "O people, learn that Islam is coming—is coming whether you like it or not. On that day the believers will rejoice in the triumph of God and the unjust will know what vicissitudes their affairs will take." [Koranic verse]

DISPUTE OVER CHALLENGED ELECTION RESULTS CONTINUES

The furor over the validity of the parliamentary election results in some constituencies continues. The paper reports in a 400-word item by Dawud Hasan on page 1 that the Higher Administrative Court has adjourned examining 96 challenges to individual results until 4 February 1996. The government has filed petitions against these challenges. The current dispute is between the challengers' argument that the courts or the State Council should decide the validity or nonvalidity of the challenged results and the government's contention that the People's Assembly is the body that should make a final decision on the matter.

HAMAS DELEGATION DENIED PERMISSION TO MEET WITH BROTHERHOOD

A 100-word item on pages 1 and 8 says that the Egyptian security services refused to give permission to a delegation of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, who were in Cairo recently for talks with a Palestinian Authority [PA] delegation, to meet with Labor Party and Muslim Brotherhood members.

The item says: "Security officials told the Hamas representatives who arrived in Cairo to hold negotiations with a PA delegation that one condition for allowing them to enter Egypt is that they must not hold meetings or make visits to the representatives of the Islamist stream in Egypt, notably the Labor Party and the Muslim Brotherhood."

EMBASSY DENIES CUBAN EXPERTS SENT TO SUDAN

The following item appears on page 8: "Cuban Ambassador to Cairo Jorge Manfugas has sent a response to the reports that claimed there are Cuban experts in southern Sudan. He asserted that there is not, there cannot be, and there never will be a single Cuban involved in the Sudanese war, which is a painful but internal political affair which the Sudanese people alone must solve."

CHIEF EDITOR LINKS RED SEA DISPUTE TO GOVERNMENT 'FOLLIES'

One of three articles by chief editor Majdi Husayn on page 2 deals with the Eritrean-Yemeni dispute over the Hanish al-Kabir Island. The 300-word article, titled "We Undermine Our National Security With Our Own Hands," says this development represents the price that Egypt is paying for its "government's follies" represented by the support it has given to "Israel's friends and agents in southern Sudan" and neighboring countries.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Husayn says: "The government established axes with the ruling regimes in Uganda, Ethiopia, and Eritrea and the rebels in south Sudan with the aim of besieging Sudan."

He adds: "As a result Israel struck against our national security in the Horn of Africa and hit us in the fatal spot of Bab al-Mandab."

Majdi Husayn doubts that Eritrea, subject to various economic and social crisis and just out of a crushing civil war, could have found the power or will to act alone in occupying Yemeni islands at the mouth of the Red Sea, an area of vital strategic importance to Egypt formerly used to block Israeli maritime trade.

He says that some reports show that the boats used in occupying Hanish al-Kabir were Israeli built and at least some of these reports have said that Israeli troops actually participated in the invasion.

He concludes: "Thus Israel has hijacked the island under the Eritrean banner. Our rulers, meanwhile, are calling for self-restraint. The Egyptian foreign minister denies that he has criticized Israel in connection with the issue. This means that we have decided to tolerate the blow and remain silent in the context of Egypt's ongoing humiliation before Israel. The Hanish al-Kabir catastrophe is fresh proof that as long as our rulers remain in their posts, this will cause daily losses to Egypt.

RAIL DISASTER BLAMED ON GOVERNMENT NEGLIGENCE

In a second article, an 800-word comment titled "The Fog Has Been Unjustly Accused... You Are the Real Culprits," Majdi Husayn says that a recent collision of two trains in al-Badrashayn in which dozens of passengers died was not caused by fog but was the result of government negligence and its failure to make the Railroad Authority's officials accountable for their actions.

He blames the prime minister for suggesting that the train driver might have been inattentive and asks him if most of the Railroad Authority's drivers are inattentive, who is to blame?

Addressing the prime minister on this point, he says: "My brother, your silence is much more splendid than your talking. When you reassured the people that you were planning an insurance law for train passengers, the people realized that you were determined to go on killing them but that the insurance companies would pay the blood money."

WRITER PROMISES 'COUNTERFEIT' PARLIAMENT WILL BE TOPPLED

Majdi Husayn's major article on page 2 deals with the recent parliamentary elections in the country. His 1,500-word article bears the following headlines: "The Elections in Occupied Chechnya... Fared Better Than Egypt's Elections. Where Does Egypt Stand in Comparison With What Happens in Russia, Poland, Austria, Taiwan, Turkey, Iran.... and Mauritius?!"

He begins by reminding the government that the opposition will not become weary and halt its campaign against "the counterfeit People's Assembly." He says that the recent elections were not merely rigged but constituted "a total overthrow of the Constitution" and compares the country's rulers unfavorably with foreign occupiers, saying that the latter would probably have been more merciful to the populace. He says that the rulers show their lack of legality by their "excessive touchiness" toward foreign criticism and declares that the parliamentary elections held in Chechnya were far more honest than their Egyptian counterparts because an Islamic political party there succeeded in winning more than 15 percent of the vote although the country was under occupation. He compares the Egyptian elections' impartiality unfavorably with recent elections in Poland, Taiwan, Tanzania, Austria, and Mauritius—where the opposition parties won 65.7 percent of the vote against the ruling party's 17.7 percent.

He wonders why the government was not satisfied with 70 percent of the vote, for example, instead of going all the way in its "vote rigging criminality." He offers a pardon to the rulers if they agree to leave their posts:

"It is possible for all of us in the opposition to promise to issue a general amnesty pardoning all your crimes. What is important is that you leave your posts which you seized by force and forgery. We are willing to engage in an honest free-election contest after this counterfeit assembly is dissolved under the motto: General amnesty for the crimes of corruption, misuse of public wealth, and murder. We are willing to do this on the basis of the religious rule 'the lesser of two evils.' A general pardon for you is less harmful than your continuing in power."

Ridiculing the ruling party's winning almost all the People's Assembly seats, he notes that in the recent Austrian elections the Socialists were described by news agencies as having "swept" the elections because they won 38 percent of the vote against their opponents' 28 percent. He reminds the government that Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani will not run for a third term because the Iranian Constitution does not allow that and says that even in the last presidential election,

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani received only 66 percent of the vote.

He addresses the government: "In your hands we have become the disgrace of all nations. All Islamist, secular, believer, and disbeliever government systems have fared better than us, including the governments of some remote islands."

He asks: "Is it logical that an entire nation should pay the price for a certain gang's wish to stay in power over the lifeless corpse of the country's progress? This is the pinnacle of absurdity."

Declaring that "Egypt is far too precious for us to remain silent and to leave her prey in your claws," Majdi Husayn says: "Our battle to overthrow the November coup d'etat [reference to 29 November general election date] has just begun. It will not end until God ordains what must happen."

A boxed 500-word item annexed to the above article says that the government has found a way of disenfranchising four million Egyptian voters residing abroad, whether they are in Los Angeles or working as sailors plowing the seas. He says that according to existing regulations these Egyptians are required to vote in their home constituencies in Egypt, instead of at Egyptian consulates abroad, and therefore can only vote if they travel thousands of miles at enormous expense and inconvenience.

LABOR PARTY LEADER SAYS PUBLIC SUPPORTS OPPOSITION

Labor Party leader Ibrahim Shukri addresses a message to the "dear sons," presumably Labor Party members, in the form of a 1,200- word article on pages 1 and 8. His message is titled: "They Sought To Make it a War Against Our Party ... and the Opposition, But I See it as a Unique Opportunity for Reconstruction and Democracy."

Shukri says that despite all the government's efforts, it failed to turn the public away from the party and was forced to resort to vote rigging.

He comments: "The result itself was a testimony to the world, that we have public support that others take into account and against which they weave conspiracies. While the government has succeeded in placing in parliament deputies who do not represent the nation's wishes, we have, thank God, succeeded in winning new supporters, in rallying the people around our political platform and our party, and in becoming with the other opposition forces the legitimate representatives of the nation."

He calls for continuing the current political campaign and making it difficult for the government to rig future elections by calling on the people to register as voters and making sure that the voter registration lists are in order.

Declaring that there is a government plan to "liquidate and besiege the Labor Party," Shukri urges cooperation with the other opposition parties and for "further cohesiveness with the political stream whose views are close to us, namely the Muslim Brotherhood."

POLITICAL SYSTEM REPROACHED, BROTHERHOOD PRAISED

A 2,000-word article on page 5 by 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Ghazali, an economics professor who ran as a candidate of the Islamic coalition in the recent parliamentary elections, discusses political conditions in Egypt and says that the government system professes to be democratic but is actually despotic. He blames the government for passing restrictive legislation against the professional associations and the press, for holding military trials for "civilians who are among the country's best citizens", and for leveling "continuing unjust accusations of violence and terrorism against a well-established political stream, namely the Muslim Brotherhood." He accuses the government of subservience to Israel and of denying the people the right to hold elections free of intervention and vote rigging.

He writes: "In the final reckoning, our dear homeland is effectively occupied by a clique which falsely claims that it is serving the country's interests while in reality destroying its present and threatening its future by burdening it with a parliament the names of whose members I am almost certain were determined in advance, that is, before the election farce was even held."

Noting that the Islamic world is marking the anniversary of the prophet's night journey to heaven and to Jerusalem, he says that on this occasion "a segment of our young men have lost hope of bringing about change through the ballot box after the very concept and symbolic meaning of a ballot box was destroyed before the box itself was crushed by unbelievably tyrannical interventions by those who should have been its guardians but turned out to be its robbers."

He says that the Muslim Brothers succeeded in presenting political platforms to the public and their candidates were second in number to those of the ruling party in the runoff election, but were prevented from winning seats by means of forgery.

Drawing inspiration from the religious anniversary of the prophet's night journey, the writer declares his

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

opposition to the idea of a Middle Eastern market that would be under "Zionist hegemony," various forms of privatization, and the "distinctly clear attempt to diminish Egypt's regional role."

He notes that Jerusalem is calling out for "a liberator" and urges the public to be full of resolve, to remember the neglected "duty of jihad," and to remember the words of the Muslim Brotherhood's founder Hasan al-Banna who said that this organization's members should not seek personal gain in the propagation of their message of righteousness.

LABOR'S SHUKRI CONGRATULATES CATHOLICS ON CHRISTMAS

The paper publishes the following announcement on page 1: "Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri offers his sincere Christmas congratulations to the Catholic brothers in Egypt. He offers special Christmas greetings to the Palestinian Catholic brothers and congratulates them on celebrating the occasion in Bethlehem for the first time [as published]. Shukri asserts that the joy of celebrating this occasion will remain incomplete until the total liberation of Jerusalem and the other occupied territories."

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 26 Dec

NC3112111295

[FBIS Editorial Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 26 December edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Editorial Criticizes Railway Authority Chief
2. Writer Urges Muslim-Christian Solidarity in Palestine
3. Islamic Historian Dr. Ahmad Shalabi Interviewed
4. Coptic Bishop Denies Religious Strife in Egypt

EDITORIAL CRITICIZES RAILWAY AUTHORITY CHIEF

In a 300-word editorial on page 1, 'AQIDATI'S Board Chairman Samir Rajab says God Almighty considers the victims of the recent collision between two train as "martyrs." He adds that "God will severely punish those who were responsible for the disaster now and in the hereafter," because they have "deliberately" killed 70 innocent citizens. Rajab adds that the chairman of the Railway Authority, instead of appearing "relaxed" on television, should have looked for a way to "atone" his "guilt," which he and his aides incurred when they ignored all rules and regulations.

Also on page 1, a 60-word report says that Muslims scholars have refused to attribute recent train accidents and disasters to "fate" and have called for handing down the "severest punishment" to those responsible. The scholars also stated that the victims of the recent train accident are "martyrs" and that those responsible should be charged with "manslaughter." Further details on these scholars' views and opinions are provided on pages 12 and 13.

In a related development, Cairo MENA in Arabic on 30 December reported that President Mubarak has dismissed the railway authority chief.

WRITER URGES MUSLIMS-CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY IN PALESTINE

In a 500-word column on page 6, Basyuni al-Halawani says he watched the Christmas mass in Bethlehem on television and saw how Palestinian Christians expressed their joy with the town's return to Arab and Islamic control after they lived under Jewish rule, control, and "aggression" for 28 years. He adds that this happiness by the followers of Christ is the strongest proof of the "tolerance" of Islam and of its coexistence with other monotheistic religions. The writer says that "solidarity" must continue between the followers of Muhammad and the followers of Christ in Palestine. He adds that Christians must continue to enjoy Islam's "tolerance and justice." The writer says 'Arafat and his wife set a good example by attending the Christmas mass in Bethlehem. 'Arafat thus confirmed to the world that Christians must enjoy "full freedom" and must exercise "all their religious, political, and social rights." The writer concludes by congratulating Christians in Egypt, Palestine, and the whole world on Christmas.

ISLAMIC HISTORIAN DR. AHMAD SHALABI INTERVIEWED

On pages 8 and 9, the newspaper publishes a 2,000 word interview with Islamic historian Dr. Ahmad Shalabi by Ibrahim Nasr and Mustafa Yasin. In the interview, Dr. Shalabi asserts that Islamic history contains many mistakes which must be corrected. He also asserts that the expected Mahdi and the Antichrist are "myths" intended to preoccupy Muslims with "peripheral" issues.

In answer to a question, Dr. Shalabi says there are mistakes in every phase of Islamic history but that it is very difficult to correct them after 1,400 years. He says Khadijah, the first wife of Prophet Muhammad, could not have been 40 years old when she married him. Most probably she was 27 or 28 years old. If she was 40 years old, this means she gave birth to her son al-Tahir when she was 57 years old. Medicine disproves this. Moreover, if she was 40 years old, it would have

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

been improper for her to propose to someone half her age. Giving another example of mistakes in Islamic history, he says the history of the Umayyad dynasty was written during the era of the 'Abbaside dynasty, which was a bitter enemy of the 'Umayyads. Dr. Shalabi says those who criticize the Koran and treat it as a literary text are "criminals and sinners." He takes to task some Arab and Islamic countries for "rushing" to normalize relations with Israel, which has defiantly declared that Jerusalem is its eternal capital. On terrorism, he says it is a worldwide phenomenon from which Islamic and non-Islamic countries are suffering. Therefore, it is unfair to accuse Islam of terrorism.

COPTIC BISHOP DENIES RELIGIOUS STRIFE IN EGYPT

On pages 8 and 9, the newspaper publishes an 800-word interview with Anba Basanti, bishop of Hulwan, by Muhammad al-Abnudi. The bishop says the majority of Muslims and Christians in Egypt live in amity and peace. He adds that those who are working for sectarian strife are a "minority which does not know the tolerance of religion." He says "persuasion" through the use of arms is "not persuasion but coercion." He admits that sometimes "harassment" by both sides occurs, but this is the exception and not the rule. He calls for respect for men of religion. "If someone has an objection, he must do so within the "rules of etiquette" and declare his view "without ridicule." He calls for dialogue among religions so that peace and security will prevail on all sides. He urges Muslim religious scholars to "open up more" to their Christian counterparts. He adds that Muslim and Christian men of religion must participate in all Islamic and Christian religious occasions because this will strengthen national unity. He blames the media for not focusing on dialogues and meetings that promote national unity.

Palestinian Affairs

Hamas To Accept Legislative Election Results

JN0301072196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, said it will accept the results of the Palestinian legislative council elections to be held on 20 January as a fait accompli.

Hamas Gaza Spokesman Mahmud al-Zahhar told the Arabic service of French radio that the forthcoming elections will impose a fait accompli. He added: We, in Hamas, cannot reject this fait accompli.

Hamas Confirms No Participation in Elections

JN0201124196 (Clandestine) Al-Quds Palestinian Arab Radio in Arabic 1030 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Statement issued by Hamas; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

With the approach of the elections enunciated in the flimsy settlement agreements signed in Oslo, Taba, and Cairo, there is an escalation of the tendentious media campaigns of defamation and the statements fabricated by our Zionist enemy, its aides and agents to distort the stands of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and to serve cheap objectives which are no secret to our mature Palestinian people. At one time, these Zionist and agent sides, through their media, disseminate reports that the Hamas leadership and struggler Shaykh Ahmad Yasin have blessed the nomination of several persons to these elections in an attempt to defame the stands of Hamas and discredit it, and to cause confusion among our Palestinian people. At other times, they issue statements under the name of the Hamas Movement to make believe that they defend Hamas' stand rejecting participation in these elections by attacking honest families and respected figures of our Palestinian people.

Sons of our people, we in the Hamas Movement assert the following:

1. The Hamas Movement's stand boycotting the elections stemming from the treasonous Oslo agreements, and refusing to participate in them in any way whatsoever and under any direct or indirect form is a final, decisive, and irrevocable stand.

2. The statement issued on 31 December 1995 under the headline "Exposing the Wicked" has nothing to with the Hamas Movement and seeks to drive a wedge between Hamas and some families and figures of our Palestinian people.

3. All those reported by the media to be Hamas candidates in the elections, including Isma'il Haniyah, Khalid al-Hindi, and Sa'id al-Namruti do not represent the Hamas Movement, are not running in the elections in its name, or with its blessing and approval.

4. The sons of the Hamas Movement are fully committed to the stand of their movement which, on the basis of its bylaws, will deal with all those who deviate from the movement's decision or violate its stand. This is our official stand which suffers no interpretation or distortion. It is the stand that has been declared in the Movement's statements, and in statements made by its official spokesman and those who are authorized to

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

speak on its behalf and express its stands far from distortion, personal or factional objectives, the well-known objectives of the tendentious campaigns, and the false statements which will never deceive our patient people.

You who believe if a wicked person comes to you with any news, ascertain the truth, lest you harm people unwittingly, and afterward become full of repentance for what you have done. [Koranic verse]

[Signed] The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas

Candidates Pressured To Withdraw To Favor Quray'

TA0201190296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon, certain Fatah leaders from north Jerusalem met secretly with Ahmad Quray', alias Abu-'Ala', at the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction [PECDAR] offices in Jerusalem's al-Barid neighborhood to discuss the nomination process to the Palestinian legislative council.

Palestinian sources disclosed to our correspondent Kayid Zahir that the meeting's aim was to pressure a number of candidates, including Muhammad Khalid from Qatannah village and others from the Abu-Dis and al-'Ayzariyah neighborhoods, to withdraw their nomination in favor of Ahmad Quray'. Rivalry in East Jerusalem has so far precluded the formation of a Fatah list, after efforts by some political parties and movements to form a joint list failed.

It is worth noting that Ahmad Quray' resigned his post as the official in charge of the Palestinian economy after nominating himself. Contrary to the law, however, he is continuing to hold consultations and discussions about the nominating process from the PECDAR offices, which belong to the Palestinian Authority [PA]. PA sources expressed their displeasure at this development and asked PA Chairman Yasir 'Arafat to investigate the matter.

3 Islamists Withdraw Nominations 'To Safeguard' Atmosphere

JN0201161796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received U.S. Senators Specter and Shelby at the Presidency in Gaza this afternoon.

Talks dealt with the latest developments of the peace process as well as Palestinian-U.S. relations and ways of promoting them. They also discussed the current preparations to hold Palestinian legislative elections scheduled for 20 January.

President 'Arafat described his talks with the two U.S. senators as positive and constructive. He added that they discussed many issues, particularly ways to consolidate and promote the peace process with all capabilities available here in Palestine and those available to Israelis and to the U.S. friends.

U.S. Senator Specter lauded the continued Palestinian efforts to hold the coming legislative elections. He also expressed pleasure at meeting with President 'Arafat.

In another development, three personalities who are considered supporters of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, in the Gaza Strip have announced their withdrawal from the Palestinian Assembly's elections.

The three personalities Isma'il Haniyah, Khalid al-Hindi, and Sa'id al-Namruti, issued a statement in Gaza today. They explained that they withdrew their nomination because confusion has spread in the Islamic circles in the Gaza Strip and there were personal interpretations on whether to nominate themselves for the Palestinian Assembly and also because they wish to safeguard the atmosphere inside the homeland.

The three Islamist personalities also called on the Palestinian people in general and the Islamists in particular to preserve unity and safeguard the normal climate. It is noteworthy here that Haniyah, al-Hindi, and al-Namruti nominated themselves for the Palestinian Assembly Sunday [31 December] evening.

Abu-Middayn Comments on Israel's Prisoner Release

TA0201180296 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 2 Jan 96 pp 1, 23

[Report by Nidal al-Maghrabi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gaza — Attorney Furayh Abu-Middayn, minister of justice and member of the negotiating committee on the issue of the Palestinian prisoners, commented on the possibility that Israel will release a batch of prisoners next week, saying that this release has not been agreed on with the Palestinian Authority [PA] but is a unilateral move in accordance with an Israeli position that contradicts the Taba agreement.

Minister Abu-Middayn added that according to the Taba agreement, there are certain criteria governing the release of prisoners. The first article of this agreement concerns the release of all female Palestinian detainees,

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

but Israel violated it and failed to release four of them, while the others refused to be released in adherence to a united position.

Abu-Middayn accused Israel of attempting to turn the prisoner issue from a political problem into a humanitarian one, which Israel is implementing unilaterally. He stressed that this is a political issue in regard to which we should not have to beg or plead with the other side.

Abu-Middayn noted that the numbers about which Israel is talking — especially the number of detainees expected to be released — are deceptive.

He said that the Israelis will unilaterally release a group of civilian detainees and others who have only a few days left to serve in prison. Thus, their release will be incompatible with the bases and criteria that were determined.

He added that through the negotiating meetings, he has come to feel that the other side is not handling the issue of Palestinian detainees as one involving freedom detainees as much as it considers them to be its hostages.

Hamas Official on Cairo Talks, Abu-Marzuq

TA3112142195 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 30 Dec 95 p 11

[Interview with Khalid Mash'al, Hamas Political Bureau head, by Tahir Shuraytah in Cairo on 23 December]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Shuraytah] What prompted you to engage in political activity?

[Mash'al] I was prompted by a feeling of national concern for the Palestinian cause, a sense of the size and danger of the Zionist plan, and the nation's need for a counterplan. I was convinced of the need to launch a comprehensive plan to confront the Zionist plan — a plan that would absorb the capabilities of the nation in all its Islamic, national, and pan-Arab tendencies. Hence, I began working on this plan.

[Shuraytah] When did you begin your activities with the Islamic Movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]?

[Mash'al] I began with the Islamic Movement in Kuwait in 1971, and with Hamas since its founding in 1987.

[Shuraytah] What is your position in Hamas?

[Mash'al] Member of the political bureau.

[Shuraytah] How were you chosen to the dialogue delegation?

[Mash'al] The political bureau chooses.

[Shuraytah] Does the political bureau represent the Hamas cabinet?

[Mash'al] Not in this sense, but as any political bureau in a movement, it is tasked with managing Hamas' political activity.

[Shuraytah] How do you envision Hamas' role in the Palestinian arena in the coming stage?

[Mash'al] Hamas' role will take on three main dimensions. The first one pertains to the continuation of action to remove the occupation from Palestinian territories. The second one is the Palestinian dimension. Hamas is interested in everything that will serve the Palestinian people — serve their unity, ease their suffering, and promote their political movements and interaction within domestic Palestinian society.

The third dimension is acting in the Arab and Islamic sectors to achieve more sympathy for the movement and interaction with the Palestinian cause so that they will not relinquish Jerusalem and support for the Palestinian people and will not respond to the pressures for normalization.

[Shuraytah] Following the lull in the intifadah and the establishment of the Islamic Salvation Party, some are saying that Hamas will fade and melt away. What is your opinion?

[Mash'al] First of all, the Salvation Party is not the party of Hamas and will not be its substitute. This is an Islamic party that includes elements from Hamas, the Muslim Brotherhood, and independent figures. Hamas does not object at all to the participation in this or other parties that seek to promote the Palestinian interest. Hamas, however, will stick to its own perception and program.

[Shuraytah] Is Hamas' leadership inside or outside the Palestinian territories?

[Mash'al] Hamas' leadership is inside. Hamas basically exists inside the occupied territories since this is the arena where our people are suffering under the occupation. Hamas has leaders and representatives outside and together with the inside leadership they constitute the movement's leading body.

[Shuraytah] How do you view Hamas' relationship with the Palestinian Authority [PA]?

[Mash'al] In view of the joint statement issued at the end of the dialogue with the PA, we hope that the climate in our relations will be that of dialogue, the continuation of dialogue, and joint effort to solve problems that arise on the way and in the field. We hope that all practices that mar the climate and all sorts of provocations will be avoided, because the Palestinian people today are in utmost need of national unity and cohesion so that they

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

will be able to continue the struggle to achieve their full rights on Palestinian land.

[Shuraytah] How do you assess the results of the Cairo talks?

[Mash'al] My assessment is that the talks were successful. Success is relative. Success is not necessarily when each side achieves all its goals from the dialogue. In view of the fact that this dialogue was the first comprehensive dialogue between the PA and Hamas, it achieved considerable success through long discussions over various issues. Each side listened to the other's views in a climate of clarity, openness, and joint concern. The avoidance and prohibition of internecine fighting and the adoption of dialogue as a civilized means to achieve understanding was stressed. It was agreed to set up a committee inside to address outstanding problems. Undoubtedly, issues remain on which views differ, especially elections and military action. We listened to the PA delegation's views and they heard ours — why we refuse to participate in the elections and why we insist on continuing our militant program. We stressed to the PA delegation that Hamas is not against the PA and does not seek to embarrass it. This created a comfortable atmosphere whereby the brothers in the PA became assured that Hamas is not seeking to embarrass the PA but is trying to resist the occupation.

[Shuraytah] In other words, are you happy with the results of the talks?

[Mash'al] I believe that the dialogue was positive, encouraging, and effective. It heralds future steps for promoting the dialogue, particularly in view of the spirit in both sides. I believe that the reflection of this spirit — the spirit of the joint statement — in the field will enhance the subsequent steps. If any setback in implementation and practice were to occur, however, this could lead us back, God forbid, to square one. We do not wish this to happen. I believe that in its dialogue, Hamas displayed a great deal of concern, which we hope will be consolidated on the ground and that the brothers in the PA will be similarly concerned.

[Shuraytah] Abu-al-Adib [Salim al-Za'nun] stated that President 'Arafat was pleased with the dialogue's results and that he speeded the final statement. What do you think?

[Mash'al] Yes, we heard this from brother Abu-al-Adib. We are certain that the final joint statement, with which we in Hamas and the PA are satisfied, will be an excellent basis for creating the fabric of a relationship in the field inside Palestine. I believe that brother Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], by virtue of his status, can reflect the spirit of this statement in the field in all practices by the PA. Moreover, we on our part will endeavor to reflect this spirit in the practices of Hamas. I hope that this mutual concern will achieve positive results for the benefit of our Palestinian people at this sensitive and crucial stage.

[Shuraytah] Let us turn to the arrest of Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq. Do you believe that the United States will hand him over to Israel?

[Mash'al] The fact is that Dr. Musa Abu-Marzuq's arrest is political. It was given legal garb and he was detained on behalf of Israel. Legal efforts have been made. More than one law firm specializing in international law and extradition issues have been recruited. All of them have affirmed that the charges submitted by Israel for Dr. Abu-Marzuq's extradition is not based on real legal arguments, but rather lacks legal credibility. This confirms that the issue is not judicial. As to whether he will be extradited, unfortunately the indications are negative. I believe that the issue will be tackled in accordance with political considerations. The detention might last long, or he could be released and extradited. It seems that the Americans want to use this as a card in their hands to serve their interests in the region.

Ministry Denounces Israeli 'Storming' of Ya'bad

JN0201152996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The [Palestinian] Information Ministry has denounced the Israeli occupation forces' storming of Ya'bad in the vicinity of Janin last night. In a statement issued today, the ministry described these Israeli measures as illegal, inhuman, and a serious encroachment on the lives of defenseless citizens, noting that these measures are a real touchstone for the Oslo accord. The Information Ministry called on the special military units to immediately stop their practices and to honor the agreements. The ministry also called on the international organizations and the cosponsors of the peace process to monitor Israeli violations of the peace agreements.

Israel, Palestinians To Open Gaza-West Bank Road

JN0301072696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0600 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian and Israeli sides agreed to seek international funding for building a highway between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The two sides also agreed to ask donor countries during the forthcoming Paris meeting to finance the feasibility studies for opening such a highway.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

The agreement came at a meeting between Dr. Nabil Sha'th and Oren Shahor, coordinator of the occupation's activities, at Erez checkpoint yesterday.

Dr. Sha'th said that the Israeli side agreed to end all restrictions imposed on the import of foreign books and publications to Palestine.

PLO, Fatah Officials Return to West Bank

TA3112132495 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 30 Dec 95 pp 1, 23

[Report by Mufid 'Awwad]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza — 'Umar al-Khatib, Palestinian ambassador to Amman, has confirmed that 300 PLO and Fatah officials have begun returning to the liberated West Bank towns. These officials include Bishop Iliya Khuri, member of the PLO Executive Committee; Abu-Mahir Ghunaym, member of Fatah Central Committee; and Ishaq al-Khatib, member of the Fatah Central and National Councils.

Al-Khatib said that the list of names was divided into two batches. He affirmed that the lists of the returnees will arrive one after the other from the concerned Palestinians quarters within the next two weeks.

Among the returnees are six PLO civilian and military officials. They are: Mahmud 'Abd-al-Jalil al-Akhsham Miqdad, Mahmud Isma'il Hubar Darwiti, Riyad Hashim Lutfi Zayd, Fawzi Hasan Ibrahim Yunus, Mahmud Sa'id Salim Sutayti, and Mundhir 'Izz-al-Din Isma'il al-Dajjani, PLO ambassador to Algeria.

Moreover, among those who were permitted to return are Bassam Abu-Sharif, 'Arafat's adviser; 'Abdallah Abu-Samahdanah, a Fatah official; Fayiz Sharrab, Fatah media official in its Cairo bureau; as well as 'Arafat's brother Muhsin 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Qidwah who lives in the United Arab Emirates; and Jamal 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al- Qidwah, son of 'Arafat's late brother, 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Qidwah, former PLO ambassador to the Yemen Republic.

The Israeli authorities rejected a list of 90 Palestinians, although the PLO had submitted their names so that they would be allowed to reside in the National Authority's areas. It is worth noting that by reviewing these names, one finds that they mostly belong to Palestinian military personnel, especially military cadres affiliated with Fatah's West and 17th sectors. [passage omitted]

Arab-Israeli Talks

Israel's Savir: Summit Necessary in Negotiations

TA0201190996 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Report by Ya'aqov Ahime'ir in Washington]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Israeli and Syrian delegations will soon shut themselves in for another three-day round of talks. Chief Israeli delegate Uri Savir has given us an official version of the issues on which Israel wishes to reach agreement with Syria at the negotiating table in this secluded mansion.

[Begin Savir recording] We have no border crossings at present. We, as well as the Syrians, want to discuss tourism, for which border crossings have to be opened. Once we discuss tourism, we must also discuss transportation, roads, flights — everything in this category. We will discuss everything, and we will not present the Syrians with any economic dictate. [end recording] [passage omitted]

A tripartite Israeli-Syrian-U.S. meeting may take place prior to the departure to the site of the talks, but a Peres-al-Asad encounter is anticipated in the midst of the talks.

[Begin recording] [Savir] If the Syrians do mean what they have been saying — namely, that they are interested in attaining a peace accord in 1996 — a meeting of leaders will have to be held in the course of the negotiations.

[Ahime'ir] Do you expect such a meeting to be held in 1996?

[Savir] If Syria is earnest about peace, I expect such a meeting to take place in the course of 1996.

[Ahime'ir] Even before the negotiations are concluded?

[Savir] The negotiations cannot be concluded without a political summit meeting. [end recording] [passage omitted]

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 2 January carries a related announcer-read report, adding: "Israel has received unequivocal clarifications from President al-Asad and his emissaries that Syria is interested in peace and full normalization with Israel. This was announced tonight by chief Israeli delegate Uri Savir. Delegation sources admitted, however, that they have not received detailed answers to date."

[In a later report on the same newscast by Channel 2 correspondent to Maryland 'Imanu'el Rosen, Rosen notes that "the Israeli delegation takes a very positive view of the unprecedented statement carried by TISHRIN to the effect that 1996 should be the year of peace with Israel."]

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Algeria

TV Profiles New Prime Minister Ouyahia

LD0201225596 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia, the new prime minister who was appointed by the president of the republic, was head of cabinet at the Presidency since February 1994. Prior to this Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia occupied several posts. Over to Zine El Abidine Bouacha for more details:

[Bouacha] Mr. Ahmed Ouyahia was born on 2 July 1952 in Bou Adenane, in Tizi Ouzou Province. He graduated from the diplomatic section of the National School of Administration. He was also awarded a postgraduate diploma in political science by Algiers University.

After working at the Presidency from 1976 to 1979 — first while he was doing his military service and then as an executive — Mr. Ouyahia returned to the Foreign Ministry where he worked at the Africa Desk from 1979 to 1981. Afterwards, he was posted to the Algerian Embassy in Abidjan from 1981 to 1984. He was then appointed as a member of Algeria's permanent delegation at the UN in New York from 1984 to 1989 where he worked as adviser to Algeria's permanent delegate and then as his deputy.

On his return to the Foreign Ministry, Mr. Ouyahia worked as adviser in the minister's cabinet and was then appointed head of the Africa desk where he stayed until August 1992. During that time he led the team of Algerian mediators in the conflict in northern Mali. This mediation was crowned with the National Pact signed in Bamako on 11 April 1992.

Mr. Ouyahia was appointed Algeria's ambassador to Mali in September 1992 but was recalled in September 1993 to be given the post of secretary of state for cooperation and Maghreban affairs. Finally, in February 1994 he was appointed head of cabinet at the Presidency, a post he has held until now.

Mr. Ouyahia is married and has two children.

Justice, Progress Party Welcome Ouyahia Appointment

LD0201125196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Algerian Party for Justice and Progress has expressed great satisfaction at the appointment of Ahmed Ouyahia as prime minister, saying that he is highly competent.

The Algerian Party for Justice and Progress called on political and social circles to stand beside the new prime minister, and offer him help in running the executive apparatus in the difficult conditions which Algeria is experiencing.

The party, which also called for providing new impetus to the political dialogue, easing the citizen's suffering, and making the conditions available for building the institutions of the Algerian state, expressed the conviction that a figure like Ahmed Ouyahia is capable of facing the challenge. In connection with challenges, the party added, there are two main topics awaiting the new government, the formation of which is expected to be announced soon. Various circles believe that these two topics are preparing for the municipal and legislative elections, and continuing the economic reform process, started by the previous government.

Exiled Islamic Leader: New Prime Minister Changes Nothing

LD0201124596 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nothing has changed after the appointment of Ahmed Ouyahia as Algerian prime minister. This is in any case what Anouar Haddam, the leader of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] parliamentary delegation abroad, stated in Washington. It is still the military institution meddling in political affairs, he said. Haddam questions the very legitimacy of last November's presidential election, unlike certain other FIS leaders in exile.

FIS Escalates Campaign Against GIA

MM2912153295 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 29 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil in London: "Algerian Islamic Salvation Front: Fatwa From London Sanctioned Said's and Redjam's Assassination"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Supporters of the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] have escalated their campaign against the Armed Islamic Group [GIA], while reliable reports from Algeria have said that contacts took place between the FIS' detained shaykhs and the two Shaykhs Mohamed Said and Abderrezak Radjam shortly before their assassination by GIA extremists.

The reports say that envoys of the two Shaykhs Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj met with Said and Radjam, both former FIS leaders who had joined the GIA in early 1994. The reports added that the two envoys discussed various issues with Said and Radjam, including the activities attributed to the GIA which the FIS leaders consider to be against Islamic law. Presumably

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Madani's and Belhadj's envoys discussed the GIA's assassination of some FIS shaykhs and leaders in Algeria and abroad with the two shaykhs, who were assassinated with a group of their supporters (some 40 people) early last November. The reports quote Said's supporters, who confirm that he was opposed to many activities attributed to the GIA, such as the killing of wives and daughters of clerks of the state's organs. The reports add that "extremists" within the GIA held the two shaykhs captive for a long period, fearing that they would denounce their actions.

Meanwhile, the AL-SABIL bulletin, published in Britain by FIS supporters, has published details of the assassination of the two Shaykhs, Radjam and Said. In the issue published today, of which AL-HAYAH has received a copy, it quotes "one of the survivors" of the assassination carried out in Medea as saying that Said, Radjam, and 50 of their followers were "slaughtered" by the GIA. It quotes the unnamed survivor as saying that "the slaughter was carried out in accordance with a fatwa issued in London, and that the accusation against them was that they had adopted the Ash'ari faith." Citing the same source, the bulletin added that "trials were held two months ago, after the fatwa was issued" and that the defendants "were isolated, tried one by one, and the death sentence carried out by cutting their throats." The bulletin says that the same source confirms that Algerian intelligence "had infiltrated the GIA leadership."

FIS supporters accuse officials of and contributors to the AL-ANSAR bulletin, distributed in London, of "propagating abnormal ideas" for the GIA. They focus on accusing two Shaykhs, Syrian Abu- Mus'ab ('Umar 'Abd-al-Hakim) and Palestinian Abu-Qatadah, of being behind the GIA fatwas. Both Abu-Mus'ab and Abu-Qatadah deny this accusation.

In this context and in its issue distributed today, the AL-SABIL bulletin strongly attacked the two shaykhs and said that they belong to "a suspect group, one of the symbols of the Afghan setback." It focused its campaign on Abu-Mus'ab because he considers the FIS' ideas to be "aberrant" and because he has accused the FIS leaders of "having taught the people subservient theories."

The AL-RIBAT bulletin, issued by supporters of the FIS in Europe, also strongly attacked Abu Mus'ab in its recent issue and accused him of working for "foreign intelligence organs" with a view to "distorting" the image of Islamic work in Algeria. It also accused him of being behind the group responsible for the assassination of Shaykh Abdelbaki Sahraoui in Paris and Shaykhs Said and Radjam in Algeria.

Leader of FIS Armed Wing Reportedly Surrenders

LD0201134296 Paris Radio France International in French 1230 GMT 2 Jan 96

In Algeria, Madani Merzak, one of the main leaders of the Islamist Salvation Army [armed branch of the FIS], reportedly surrendered to the Algerian authorities last week.

EL NASR, the government daily published in eastern Algeria, and the radio have reported this information, but it has not been officially confirmed.

'Larbaa Battalion' Pulls Out of GIA

MM0201141796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 1 Jan 96 p 6

[Report by Kamil al-Tawil: "Algerian Group Renounces Allegiance To Armed Group"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New information was received from Algeria yesterday to the effect that Armed Islamic Group [GIA] ranks have weakened since its hard-liners were accused of killing two former prominent Islamic Salvation Front leaders who joined the GIA in the spring of 1994.

AL-HAYAH yesterday received a statement issued by the "Larbaa Battalion" [katibat al-arba'a'], in which it declared its allegiance to the GIA null and void. The statement, dated 23 December and signed by Mustafa Kertali [as transliterated] (Yahia Belkassem), recalled that the armed group operating in the Larbaa mountains area joined the GIA under Abu Abdallah Ahmed [Sharif Kouasmi] on 13 May 1994.

The statement, entitled "A Clarification for the Mujahidin and Muslims in General," added that Djamal Zetouni (Abu Abderrahmane Amine) "temporarily" assumed the GIA leadership after Kouasmi's murder, pending consultations with the other armed groups to choose an authentic amir for the GIA. The statement said that the temporary leader had become permanent and the GIA — during Zetouni's leadership — had "witnessed the marginalization of the knowledgeable people whom Abu Abdallah Ahmed used to consult, such as Shaykh Mohamed Said, may God have mercy upon him."

The statement issued by the Larbaa group spoke about "the phenomenon of the disappearance of some brother mujahidin known in the jihad arena. We heard that they had been killed in an ambush...." The statement added that "it has become clear that many of our brothers have been treacherously and unjustly killed by those who are in charge of mujahidin affairs. They have been killed merely because they have religious knowledge

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

or military and organizational experience in the Islamic call sphere." The statement listed the names of a number of those who had disappeared, such as Mohamed Said, Abderrezak Redjam, Abdelhamid Boucha, Abdelwahab Imara, Soliman Bousadoun, Chaaban Zerman, Djawal Kara, Mohamed Lamine Marouf, and Issa Berafta [all names as transliterated]. The statement said in conclusion that "the conditions of our allegiance have now been negated and become null and void." [passage omitted]

Security Forces Eradicate 100 'Terrorists'

LD0201181296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The fight against terrorism and crime is a continuous, permanent concern of the authorities.

Within less than four days the security forces eradicated some 100 terrorists, including 22 between Tuesday [26 December] and Friday [29 December] in Ain Defla, Algiers, Blida, Tizi Ouzou, and Constantine.

Bread, Oil Prices Set To Increase

LD0201233696 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The finance law for 1996 has dictated some amendments regarding oil tax in the domestic market as well as small increases to the price of bread. These measures will become effective from tomorrow, 3 January. Here are more details on the subject in a report by Zine El Abidine Bouacha.

[Bouacha] [passage omitted] The price of 250 grams of ordinary bread will become 7.5 dinars; a bottle of butane gas will become 80 dinars, a bottle of propane gas will become 200 dinars, liquidized gas (gpl) [as heard] will become 5 dinars per liter, four star gasoline will become 16.5 dinars per liter, three star petrol will become 14.5 dinars per liter, diesel oil will become 9.3 dinars, and fuel oil will become 8.50 dinars per liter.

According to the statement by the government's trade department these prices will remain unchanged throughout 1996. The new increase in the price of bread is due to the great increase in the price of grains in the international market, as the price of one tonne of soft wheat has increased by 61 percent and that of flour by 42.5 percent. The revenues of the increase in the price of oil products will be directed towards supporting large-scale social operations for the benefit of citizens in the areas of housing, health, and social security. [passage omitted]

Agreements Signed on Debt Rescheduling

LD3112000395 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Within its agreement with the Paris Club, Algeria will have signed, by the end of this month, nine bilateral accords with Holland, Belgium, Finland, Denmark, Canada, Norway, Austria, Sweden, and Germany to reschedule its debt repayments.

The Bank of Algeria said today that the bilateral negotiations it conducted with the Paris Club took place in favorable circumstances. The bank's statement added that the ongoing negotiations with another eight creditor countries, members of Paris Club, are about to finish and accords are expected to be signed in the first quarter of the coming year.

Egypt

Reportage of Sidqi Resignation, al-Janzuri Appointment

Sidqi Tenders Resignation Letter

NC0201180096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1750 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — At an emergency meeting of the Council of Ministers this evening, Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi tendered his government's resignation letter.

The council approved the letter, which Dr. Sidqi will present to President Husni Mubarak, Information Minister Safwat al-Sharif said after the 30-minute emergency meeting of the Council of Ministers.

The information minister added that Dr. Sidqi took that decision to give the president the opportunity to select whoever he sees suitable for this sensitive phase of the march of national action in Egypt.

Al-Sharif said that Dr. Sidqi thanked the government members for their efforts over some nine years of service, which involved three ministerial reshuffles.

He added that the ministry shouldered the responsibility and the tasks entrusted to it by President Mubarak through that period. He wished the next government the president will select all success in its tasks.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

MENA Carries Text of Sidqi's Letter

NC0201191196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1830 GMT 2 Jan 96

["Text" of Prime Minister Dr. 'Atif Sidqi's letter of resignation; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — Your Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, President of the Republic; greetings and regards.

Since I was honored with the designation to form the government on 9 November 1986, and over the past nine years, I, and the colleagues who shared the responsibility with me, have made our utmost efforts to achieve the higher national goals and carry out the successive tasks entrusted to us by your excellency.

We have appreciated the heaviness of the burden and the greatness of the responsibility and have been loyal soldiers for the homeland and the leader. In its successive formations, the ministry has always been the subject of your attention, heeding your directives, seeking your advice, and enjoying your confidence.

Mr. President: Since 1991, Egypt has implemented a program for economic reform that perfectly suited our social conditions and took the interests of the low-income groups into account, something you have been careful to stress on every occasion.

As attested by international organizations, the government managed to achieve great success in implementing the first phase of the program, which sought primarily to adjust the financial and fiscal policies.

We have started to implement the second phase, which seeks to increase production, provide job opportunities, and raise the citizens' standard of living. There is a prospected vision of development up to the year 2000, whose primary goal is to improve the citizens' conditions and raise their standard of living by raising the annual growth rate to 8 percent.

In your excellency's speech before the joint meeting of the People's Assembly and Consultative Council at the opening of the new parliamentary session on 16 December 1995, you outlined a continuous plan of action to implement this strategy.

Seeing the considerable accomplishments; wishing to harvest their fruits in consistency with the public goals in the coming stage, a stage that depends on making a giant achievement involving the Egyptian community and economy; and guided by the above-mentioned strategy, its ambitious goals, and the need to contribute thought, work, and money to achieve it in addition to completing the march of economic reform, it gives me and my colleague members of the Council of Ministers pleasure to submit to your excellency the government's resignation to give your excellency the chance to select whoever you see fit for the responsibility in the coming stage.

We trust that this great people, who overcome the harshest stages of development with their steadfastness and sacrifices under your wise leadership will manage to lay the sound foundation for a comprehensive revival and to cross to the 21st century with the realized national aspirations.

As I submit this resignation, I can only express my and my government's appreciation and esteem for your excellency, as well as our gratitude for the confidence you have invested in us over this period. We pray to the Almighty to guide Egypt under your leadership to realizing its aspirations and to protect you.

Your Excellency; accept our esteem.

[Signed] Dr. 'Atif Sidqi, chairman of the Council of Ministers

Mubarak Replies to Sidqi's Letter

NC0201202896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1940 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak has expressed his deep appreciation for the great efforts that Dr. 'Atif Sidqi and his cabinet exerted since he was designated prime minister in 1986. In his reply to the letter of resignation that Dr. Sidqi presented today, President Mubarak praised Dr. Sidqi's efforts in the domains of planning and implementing economic reform, which won the appreciation of competent circles. The text of President Mubarak's letter in reply to Dr 'Atif Sidqi's letter of resignation submitted today follows:

Mr. 'Atif Sidqi: Greetings. I have received your letter dated 2 January 1996 in which you and your colleague members of the cabinet tendered your resignation after having performed the duties assigned you in October 1986.

I would like to express to you my deep appreciation for the great efforts you exerted since you assumed responsibility as prime minister and for the tangible and unprecedented achievements you have attained in numerous domains during an important era of national revival. I would like to praise in particular the valuable work you did in the field of economic reform — its planning and implementation — in such a way that won the appreciation of all competent circles. You showed attention to safeguarding the basic interests of the people and complying with our decision that reforms must be

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

a purely Egyptian effort in their goals and methods, primarily taking into count the country's circumstances, situation, and requirements and observing the principle of social justice, which is one of the basic pillars of the regime.

You have always won my trust and were unprejudiced in performing your duty. You demonstrated devotion in bearing the trust and were strictly committed to objectivity and concern for public interests. You safeguarded the integrity of the government and pursued scientific planning and study. You demonstraied cooperation in team spirit with all official and nongovernmental establishments which were capable of enriching national action.

You have performed your duty in the best possible way, achieved what was hoped for, and were worthy of the trust we placed in you and your colleagues in the cabinet. I have no doubt that you will continue your sacrifices for the homeland. It pleases me to express to you and your colleagues sincere thanks and appreciation and wish you success.

[Signed] Muhammad Husni Mubarak, Cairo, 11 Sha'ban 1416 of the Hegira, corresponding to 2 January 1996

Mubarak Asks al-Janzuri To Form Cabinet

NC0201182996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1820 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — President Muhammad Husni Mubarak has asked Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri to form a new cabinet to replace the cabinet of Prime Minister 'Atif Sidqi, who submitted his government's resignation today.

Mubarak on New Cabinet's Tasks

NC0201203996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1945 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — President Husni Mubarak has applauded the performance of Dr. 'Atif Sidqi's government. In a statement to journalists after he asked Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri to form a new government, President Mubarak said: Dr. Sidqi worked with me for over nine years and it was he who initiated the economic reform policy in the most difficult times. President Mubarak added: Dr. Sidqi went through the hard times with calm and level-headedness and always depended on thorough studies. He was never rash but honest in his work, therefore, I greet this man. Had not the efforts been too much for him, I would have kept him for another period.

President Mubarak said: I want to explain another thing. Regarding the philosophy of change, I want to give a new push for national work in various domains. I change [persons] in order to stimulate the development process. Our objectives are well-defined. I explained them in my speech before the People's Assembly.

Asked about the criteria for the selection of the new ministers, President Mubarak said: I leave this matter to the prime minister-designate. He will investigate and see if he wants to change faces or cooperate with those oriented toward realization of the public interest.

Replying to a question on who will stay on in the new cabinet, President Mubarak said: I cannot say now who will stay and who will go. I leave this to the new prime minister.

Asked whether there will be changes soon in governors after the new cabinet, President Mubarak said: Governor changes are next. We will conduct a rejuvenation at the governors' level and pump some new blood in governorates.

Asked whether the president had planned that change some time ago or thought of the matter recently, the president said: I think and look for the better and more active in a constant manner, taking the country's interests into account, particularly in relation to current developments in the region and the world at large.

The president replied to another question on what he expects from the new cabinet, particularly with the election of a new People's Assembly. He said: The objectives of our plan are there; we do not improvise. As I said in my speech before the People's Assembly and Consultative Council, in order to enter the 21st century there are some goals we must pursue, either through the new government or the next one. We have to work in that context.

Asked whether Dr. 'Atif Sidqi will have a position in the coming stage, President Mubarak said: Let us leave that subject; it is premature to say.

Asked about the motto of the new government, President Mubarak said: Preparing for the 21st Century.

Asked if the replacement of Dr. Sidqi would mean a change in Egyptian policy, President Mubarak said: There is no change in Egyptian policy.

Asked if there will be a new formula for economic reform, President Mubarak said: Our policy will never change.

Asked whether the privatization program will be stepped up, President Mubarak said: I believe that these are our goals. I hope more of these goals will be achieved.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

The president was asked whether he will entrust the new cabinet with special tasks involving public issues in the context of his directives to prepare Egypt for the 21st century. He replied: Our urgent public issues are to raise the standards of low-income groups and those with limited means. This is our primary goal.

The president reaffirmed in replying to a question that the primary goals in the economic and social fields are to improve and raise the standard of living and to help low-income groups and those with very limited means. This is the central goal that has not changed. The government changes but the goals do not, he said, adding that the task of the new government is to give momentum to the development process.

Asked whether the new government will continue to implement the economic reform and privatization policies, the president said: This is an agreed program. If it has slowed down slightly, it is important to step up the pace, but in a way that does not affect low-income groups or those with very limited means.

Answering a question on whether the tasks he will entrust to the new government are the same as those he outlined in his speech to the People's Assembly, President Mubarak said: The tasks are the same; what I entrust to the new government. The previous government has made extraordinary efforts. Nobody can deny that. We encountered problems involved in economic reform and were engaged in negotiations with the IMF and many other quarters. We have crossed the most difficult stages. We are now going through the privatization stage. Maintaining the economic reform process is imperative.

Asked whether this change will be followed by changes in all the sectors, like he said during his recent meeting with teachers, President Mubarak said: Change is a constant process. I cannot repeat what used to happen in the past, I mean inciting the people and changing the entire government whenever there is a certain problem and then the new government keeps criticizing the policies of its predecessor and stays off balance for a year while the economy collapses. This is not possible; policies must be maintained.

The president added that change is a constant process. I said before that we have changed some 77 ministers in the past period, he said.

The president continued: If we compare this to changes that occur in advanced countries like Britain, we will find that change there was limited. Also in France, change involved no more than two or three ministers. The same thing happened in Germany to Kohl's government.

In response to a question on whether the change will be comprehensive in the new government, President Mubarak wondered: Is it reasonable to change all the ministers and bring new persons or ones who have no sufficient knowledge to draw up plans from the beginning? He said that a minister who is able will continue in the new government, and we will change an unable minister or one who is exhausted so that the process may continue. He added: Naturally, when a government tenders its resignation, it will resign in its entirety and the designated prime minister will choose the ministers and assess the public interest. For instance, if a minister was implementing his plans at a good and fast rate, why should we change him? Should we do this so that a new minister can begin reviewing and modifying the plans, particularly since it is customary that a new person will inevitably find that previous policies were mistaken? He would then begin planning anew and by the time he finishes he would take one and half years planning and in the meantime the situation would deteriorate.

In response to a question on whether certain ministries will be merged, President Mubarak said: There is thinking about this, but the tasks in our ministries are very numerous because our problems are many. There is a minister in charge of transport and another in charge of agriculture and land reclamation, and another in charge of education and higher education. These are enormous burdens, but we will try to ease the burdens as much as we can. He added: I requested that Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri address this issue.

In reply to a question on whether certain ministries will be divided, such as the ministry of transport and communications and civil aviation, President Mubarak said no. He said: I mean that we will call transport and communications only as such. Since it is a ministry of transport and communications, there will be offices for civil aviation. As for the ministry of education and higher education, there will be offices for higher education.

Replying to another question on Egypt's recently joining the Security Council membership and whether there will be a change in Egypt's foreign policy, President Mubarak said: We will not change our foreign policy.

Responding to a question on whether the new government will place among its priorities the issues of unemployment and youths, President Mubarak said: We give the youths and unemployment great attention; however, I want to point out that we talk of unemployment as if Egypt is the only country with unemployment and as if the world is not suffering from this problem. He added: There are far greater rates of unemployment in coun-

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

tries other than Egypt. In order to provide jobs, we are working to increase investment and increase projects, which I mentioned in my speech before the People's Assembly.

In response to a question on the proportion of change in the new cabinet, President Mubarak said: I cannot say that now; let us wait for the consultations and proposals of the prime minister.

Asked whether there will be a change in the leadership of the National Democratic Party, President Mubarak said that there is no link between the change of the government and the party.

MENA Profiles al-Janzuri

NC0201194896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1835 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — New Egyptian Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri is 63 years old. He spent 20 years in leading ministerial posts as governor, planning minister, and deputy prime minister for the past nine years. He was born in the al-Minufiyah Governorate on 12 January 1933. He graduated from the Cairo University College of Agriculture and later obtained a Ph.D. in economics from Michigan University. He worked as a professor in several Egyptian universities and institutes.

Dr. al-Janzuri worked as an instructor at the National Planning Institute in 1973, as under secretary of the planning ministry during 1974-1975, a governor of the al-Wadi al-Jadid in 1976, and a governor of Bani Suwayf in 1977. He also worked as director of the National Planning Institute in 1977 and then minister of planning and international cooperation in 1982. He assumed the post of deputy prime minister and planning minister in November 1987 and chairman of the board of directors of the National Planning Institute. He also worked as an economic adviser to the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa and member of the advisers of the president of the republic in the Specialized National Councils for production, education, and services. He was chosen as a member of the board of directors of the al-Sadat Academy for Administrative Sciences and the board of directors of the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology.

Al-Janzuri Starts Work on New Government

NC0201191796 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1850 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — Prime Minister-Designate Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri has stated that he will immediately start consultations to form a new government. He said the new government will take its inspiration from President Mubarak's speech to the People's Assembly in December 1995, during which he explained the features of work in the coming phase.

President Mubarak received Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri this evening and asked him to form a new government.

Musa Urges Restraint Between Israel, Lebanon

NC0201151996 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1450 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 2 Jan (MENA) — Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has called for the activation of the Lebanon-Israeli track of the peace process as soon as possible. In a press statement today, Musa said Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon and the achievement of a peaceful solution based on the land-for-peace principle are the guarantees for a calm situation and ordinary ['adiyah] relations between Lebanon and Israel.

Asked to comment on Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak's threats against Lebanon following Hizballah's recent attacks against northern Israel, Musa said it is not necessary now to resort to old methods, whether in words or deeds; what is required is to prepare the atmosphere to make progress on this track.

Sinai Resident Accused of Spying for Israel

NC0301083996 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic
1 Jan 96 p 14

[Report by Yusuf Hilal]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Higher State Security Court, at its 8 January session, will examine the continuing remand of 'Amir Sulayman, who is accused of spying for the Israeli intelligence service. In November, the court decided to remand him in custody for 45 days, which will end in the first week of January, pending the ongoing investigations conducted by the State Security Prosecution Department under Attorney General Counselor Hisham Saraya. In light of these investigations, the defendant will be tried and a bill of indictment will be announced in the first espionage case since 1990.

ROSE AL-YUSUF has learned that the security agencies followed the Israeli spy for months before catching him last year monitoring the movements of the Egyptian Army in southern and northern Sinai. He also collected confidential information on military movements and training in Sinai and conveyed it to the Israeli intelligence service, the Mosad, which recruited and hired him to work for it against Egyptian national interests.

ROSE AL-YUSUF has also learned that defendant 'Amir Sulayman lives in Rafah, northern Sinai. He used his residence in that area for spying purposes. According

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

to the investigation conducted by the State Security Prosecution Department, he owns a large farm in the area.

Court Imprisons 8 al-Jihad 'Terrorists,' Acquits 12

NC0301093396 Cairo AL-AKHBAR in Arabic 29 Dec 95 p 8

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Higher State Security Court-Emergency yesterday passed its verdict in what is known as the repudiation case, in which 20 terrorists from the al-Jihad Organization in Ismailia, al-Qalyubiyah, and al-Sharqiyah were on trial.

The court sentenced the group's leader, a fugitive abroad, to 15 years with hard labor; two defendants to 10 years; three defendants to five years; and two defendants to three years with hard labor. Twelve defendants were acquitted. [passage omitted]

The security agencies arrested the defendants in September 1994 in Ismailia, al-Sharqiyah, and al-Qalyubiyah. They admitted receiving training in the manufacture of explosives and use of weapons in the Ismailia Desert.

Party Leader Interviewed on Election Failure

MM2912161795 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 27 Dec 95 p 6

[Interview with EAP leader Jamal Rabi' by unidentified correspondent in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Do you have any clear explanation for the failure of all the Egyptian Arab Party [EAP]'s candidates in the recent elections?

[Rabi'] They did not fail. Instead, they fought a fierce, honorable, and fair battle and obtained a large number of votes. Although I did not expect this result, the nature of the elections, what happened in them, and the controversy surrounding them until now, is what led to that. The violence phenomenon which prevailed during the elections does not augur well, and requires the regime to make a stand in the name of God and the homeland in order to contain this inadmissible conflict between the political parties' masses and the ruling National [Democratic] Party. This is imperative, and although I am totally convinced that such action is necessary, I can see that it is difficult and tough, however, I urge President Husni Mubarak to personally intervene, meet with the political parties' leaders, and hold a dialogue with them in order to achieve together what would best serve Egypt's interests and Egypt's people above all else, because what has happened thus far would incite Egypt's enemies — and they are many — into thinking that there is a widening rift between the regime, the people, the parties, and all the civilized democratic institutions.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] So far you have not explained clearly why your party's candidates failed, especially in view of the fact that yours is not a traditional opposition party, but instead stems from the seat of power?

[Rabi'] That is true, however, we are an objective opposition.... We are a party opposed to everything which is against the interest of the homeland as a whole.... The EAP's opposition follows a single line, namely to make its opinion known, affirm it, and hold a dialogue with the regime and with the other parties in order to achieve what would serve everybody's interest.... Our opinion is correct with room for error and the opinion of others is wrong with room for truth.... This is an accurate and sincere saying and the EAP, since its inception, has always had this special unbiased quality. We define our cause in two words: Egypt and what has become of it and the Egyptian person and his lot.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Can we say that, by denying his vote to an EAP candidate, the voter is expressing directly his rejection of the party's policies during the time when it was in power, toward the end of the seventies?

[Rabi'] This is not correct.... The EAP was the party responsible for the change from a despotic, totalitarian regime to an oasis of democracy under the leadership of the late former Prime Minister Mamduh Salim, and let us not forget President al-Sadat who added the democratic dimension to this change, even though he did backtrack later. The EAP has always been the defender of democracy and this the voter knows full well.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] But the absence of any of the party's candidates on the parliament floor confirms that the EAP is still removed from the masses, and especially the young who have joined the voters' ranks during the last 14 years during which the party was absent from the political arena.

[Rabi'] It seems to me that what has in fact happened is that the party's return to the political arena has become a reality. The young people themselves have joined the EAP's ranks in a way that I did not expect... In view of what happened in these elections, the party's higher committee has decided to restructure the party along specific lines, namely that 75 percent of the membership should be allocated to young people between the ages of 21 and 35, and 20 percent to young people between the ages of 35 and 40. The remaining 5 percent is for the parents and the wise, to lead this march.... We have

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

indeed started to form a young party and have decided to hand over the running of the march to the young.

[AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT] Therefore, it is possible to consider that the restructuring of the party is a direct reaction to the failure at the elections?

[Rabi'] Yes, yes, yes. As far as we are concerned, these elections were the light that showed us the way, and made us recognize that the time has come for the young to lead this party and take on the responsibility of spreading it in all the governorates, and this is what we have effectively started to do.

Islamists Criticize Cairo Stand on Hanish Incident

MM2912162995 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 28 Dec 95 p 6

[Report by Muhammad Salah in Cairo: "Egyptian Islamists Criticize Cairo's Stand on the Yemeni-Eritrean Conflict"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Egyptian Islamists residing in Europe have criticized Cairo's stand on the Yemeni-Eritrean crisis which erupted following the invasion of greater Hanish island by Eritrean forces. They have stressed that such a significant incident "should have been dealt with seriously and with more than shabby methods." They warned that the invasion of the island constitutes a serious threat to Egypt's national security.

AL-HAYAH has obtained a copy of a bulletin called AL-MUHAJIR, issued by the Islamic Committee for the Defense of the Oppressed, which includes Egyptian Islamists living in Europe, saying that Eritrea's invasion of the island is "a step which shows the extent of the humiliation that the Arabs are enduring." It added: "If the Nile is the artery of life for Egypt's people, the Red Sea and the Suez Canal are the arteries of Egypt's economy. The invasion of the island commanding the entrance to the Bab al-Mandab straits by Eritrea, known for its strong ties with Israel, is a mighty blow to Egypt's national security and has repercussions on the Mediterranean states. It seems that Eritrea, whose relations with the United States and the West have greatly improved because it is a state confronting Sudan and an expert in the conspiracies against it, has taken advantage of these relations to get the green light to undertake this step, which is too big for its size."

British Official Comments on Ties, Gulf, Iraq

NC2912221995 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2140 GMT 29 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 29 Dec (MENA) — Michael Portillo, British secretary of state for defense, has praised the military cooperation between Egypt and his country. He said that this cooperation was manifest in the Bright Star maneuvers that took place in Egypt recently and in their participation in the UN peace-keeping force in Bosnia. In a statement to the newspaper AL-AHRAM published in the Saturday [30 December] edition, he said that he welcomes favorable opportunities for cooperation between the Egyptian and British Armed Forces.

Portillo called on Israel to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty [NPT], stressing that arms limitations in the Middle East are required and complementary to the peace process. He reiterated his country's support for President Husni Mubarak's initiative to free the Middle East of weapons of mass destruction, saying that this initiative will broaden the regional peace provided that all the region's countries participate in free negotiations on this issue.

Discussing the situation in the Gulf region, Portillo, who will begin a visit to the United Arab Emirates [UAE] tomorrow, said that Britain feels deep concern over Iran's activities in the region. He stressed his country's support for a peaceful solution to the dispute between the UAE and Iran over the islands of Abu Musa, Tunb al-Sughra, and Tunb al-Kubra.

Regarding the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq, Portillo said that these sanctions will continue until Baghdad complies with all the Security Council resolutions. He noted that his country will continue to participate in the allied forces in north Iraq until the Iraqi president stops the acts of repression against civilians. He warned that the biological weapons available to Iraq are more hazardous than its chemical weapons.

Libya

Al-Qadhdhafi on Clinton, U.S. Policy, Mideast

BR0201131796 Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 31 Dec 95 p 6

[Report on interview with Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi by Roberto Perrone in Bab al-Aziziyah; date not given: "Al-Qadhdhafi: 'Naples, You Are in Our Sights'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli — The house of horrors and of memories is across the field. Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi invites guests to visit it in order to lend strength to his remarks. There in that strange gutted building lie the relics of a special kind of archaeology, that of war — bits of bombs, missile components, covered in brick dust, as though the events had happened just yesterday. There is a visitors' book. It is a museum to commemorate the U.S. bombing of 1986 when

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Reagan targeted al-Qadhdhafi and missed; or rather when he hit one of his homes but not the man himself.

"They say that I have been the target of several attacks, and you also talk about Ustica [reference to unresolved mystery behind 1980 airplane disaster], but that was the only one that I am aware of. They also say that I have many doubles: Show me them; I would not want them to spoil my image." The colonel is very attached to his image, and is not relinquishing his own ideas.

Here is one example that affects us — the missile fired at Lampedusa immediately after the U.S. attack on Tripoli. "We tried to hit not Italy but a base of the Sixth Fleet that led the aggression against us. Now, as then, I would attack any location where an aggression against Libya were to be organized; I would be willing to hit even Naples, where the NATO base is."

It was night time in Bab al-Ziziyah, one of the five gates to the city, in the middle of this gigantic military camp, in the presence of the man who has governed Libya for the past 26 years, as we were reminded by the numbers hanging on every street corner. Al-Qadhdhafi received guests at the entrance to his tent, with his black barnous draped nonchalantly over his shoulders, with which — seasoned actor that he is — he gestured frequently during the interview-cum-address.

He exuded a strong charisma, the interpreter sounded excited, many of the slogans used were familiar (those concerning Italy's "lies,") while others were updated. It was crowded in the tent, with the man who said of himself: "I do not know either where or when I was born — perhaps on a camel. At that time we were fleeing from the persecution of the Italians and British; we were born on the run."

For two days al-Qadhdhafi's Italy was confined to two soccer teams. "We are giving Italy another opportunity to move on from fine words to deeds. There still remains the psychological obstacle of the nonpayment of compensation for damage suffered under the occupation. People here are still being blown up by Italian mines. Thousands of families have had a parent deported or killed. Let us end this business, and there will be no limits to cooperation between our two peoples."

This is an old story, of course, but for al-Qadhdhafi so too are our present corruption problems: "It is the nature of capitalism and of multi-party systems. There will always be crises of this kind. I call on the Italian people to form people's committees." The people that he used to deal with have gone; [former Italian Prime Minister] Bettino Craxi [currently in exile in Tunisia] has become a neighbor: "I do not know him."

The events of 1969 in Libya do not seem to be over; the signs of al-Qadhdhafi's power seem intact, but across the border there have been changes of reference points, strategies, and alliances, and atlases have been redesigned. "When the USSR existed it did not do much for us: Where was it when 170 U.S. aircraft tried to kill me? Communism is returning to Russia, but even if this were not so, remember that the right-wing parties are even more anti-Western and anti-American. Be that as it may, I am not in an impasse like Fidel Castro: We lost nothing with the end of communism. Cuba, however, was part of Moscow, and found itself exposed to the sun without an umbrella."

Al-Qadhdhafi urged people to read his green book and to consider it different from the Islamic movements causing bloodshed across the Arab world. "They want to bring the jihad even to the Christian countries, but I do not believe in that. Their hatred stems from Western support for the Jews against the Muslims, who have been colonized for years. I agree with the analysis, but not on the practical plane." But the peace process is progressing in the Middle East. "It is temporary activity; it will end, and the truth will emerge: The Israeli army is still everywhere, around Gaza, in Jericho; it bombards Lebanon from the South. 'Arafat entered Bethlehem surrounded by Israeli police. What kind of peace is that? In any case, the real problem is the 5 million Palestinians without a homeland: Israel will never take them back; that would be like creating a new South Africa."

Once there was Reagan, now there is Clinton. Something has changed: "He is not an enemy, like Reagan; our file on him is blank. He is not an aggressive person. There is incomprehension between us, but no longer war. My opinions about America are no longer the same as before, though I am convinced that its intervention in the former Yugoslavia is a means of occupying a land that had formerly escaped U.S. influence. For that matter, it is always this way: Peace in Bosnia, peace in Ireland, peace in Israel will disappear after the elections in the United States." Outside it was pitch dark; the meeting was over. Al-Qadhdhafi posed for a group photograph, spoke about his love of sport, and told how the embargo forces Libya into isolation by preventing it from using its airport. "I am not a passive spectator; if I could choose I would be a soccer player, because soccer is the masses' favorite sport. We cannot go anywhere, but every Italian soccer team is welcome in Libya." Italians are good people. As long as they have a ball between their feet.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Mauritania

President Dismisses Prime Minister Boubaker

AB0201145096 Paris AFP in English 1442 GMT 02 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nouakchott, Jan 2 (AFP) — Mauritanian President Maaouya Ould Sidi Ahmed Taya on Tuesday [2 January] dismissed his prime minister, Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker, officials announced in the capital Nouakchott.

A former finance minister, Boubaker had headed the government for four years. The appointment of a new premier was expected to follow in the hours after the announcement.

Khouna Appointed New Prime Minister

LD0201180696 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mauritanian President Maaouya Ould Sidi Ahmed Taya has appointed today Cheikh el Afia Ould Mohamed Khouna as prime minister succeeding Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker, whose mission has been terminated today by the Mauritanian president.

The new Mauritanian prime minister used to be the minister of fisheries and maritime economy.

Radio Speculates on Reasons for Boubaker Dismissal

AB0201200596 London BBC World Service in English 1705 GMT 2 Jan 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mauritania has a new prime minister today. Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker has been sacked by President Taya and replaced all within a matter of hours, and he has held the post for four years. On the line to Nouakchott, William Wallace asked our correspondent Sheikh Bekaye if people there were surprised by today's moves.

[Begin recording] [Bekaye] The dismissal was a couple [as heard] of surprise for Mauritanians who did not expect that Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker be removed.

[Wallace] And were relations between the president and the prime minister deteriorating? Is this why the president dismissed his prime minister?

[Bekaye] No, not at all. The relations were very, very good and people felt that Taya had complete confidence in his prime minister. That is why people are surprised.

[Wallace] So, has there been any official explanation of why the prime minister has been sacked?

[Bekaye] No. Only a communique issued by the presidency that said President Taya received his prime minister and informed him of his decision to dismiss him. The communique added that Taya praised the work of Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker during the last four years.

[Wallace] And on the street what are Mauritanians saying? Has anyone got any feelings of why this may have happened?

[Bekaye] Only people are surprised. There has not been any reaction. People are waiting for the formation of the new government. Only the new prime minister has been known. He is Cheikh El Afia Ould Mohamed Khouna, former minister of petrol [former title as heard] in the government of Sidi Mohamed Ould Boubaker. He is a young man, he is from the regions of the south, which is highly-populated, and his nomination is in relation with the legislative elections expected in this year and that will be followed by presidential election. [sentence as heard]

[Wallace] So this could be a move to shore up support for the ruling party in the south of the country?

[Bekaye] Yes, this must be that. [end recording]

Sudan

Al-Bashir Addresses National Congress

EA0101204696 Khartoum SUNA in English 1244 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [no dateline as received] — President of the Republic Gen. 'Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir addressed this morning the inaugural session of the national congress which synchronizes with the country's celebration of the 40th anniversary of Sudan independence. Following is the full text of al-Bashir's addressed translated by SUNA:

Brothers, members of the national congress:

I thank Allah who brought us together in the morning of the 40th anniversary of Sudan's independence in an era of a new renaissance whereby we lay down the basis for all the aspects of life, in the context of a concept and a plan based on full awareness of ourselves, our history and our cultural identity.

The pillar of this identity is the true meaning of independence for which the first step was taken by our prudent predecessors, who devoted their lives struggling for a free, independent, unified, progressing Sudan, ruled by its sons and daughters, where the people reap its fruits and deliver the surplus to the rest of the world, coupled with profound dealings and relationships, fulfilling its role in the African Continent and the Arab nation while

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

calling for fraternity and setting a good example along with them, in full interaction with the whole world.

The Sudanese flag and the national anthem were but a symbol by which to begin the march for the sake of a dear and honourable people who are worthy of freedom, a people who assume their responsibilities before claiming their rights. They lead a life based on Shura (consultation), freedom, pursuance of the good and a competition based on tolerance, unity and consensus.

But forty years of independence have almost elapsed, while the Sudanese people have yet to recover from the state of unconsciousness when the national experience (to rule the country) was dissipated by successive series of governments, uprisings, revolutions to destroy dictatorships, coup d'etat, followed by multi-party regimes, coalitions based on the wreckage of other coalitions, while the Sudanese people, in their far villages, remain to be victims whose property was plundered, and their destiny determined by sectarianism, through immaterial coercion and by dictatorship through material coercion. They were asked to vote in elections marked by rigging and fraudulence, to contrive a regime in which a despot would dominate the political scene, irrespective of the alleged parliament, which resembles a hollow structure without content.

The constituent assemblies were forums without decision making, or the delegation of power to a single candidate who is satisfied by nothing less than a percentage that comes closer to a full fictional consensus, which nobody could recognize. The people would then stage a new revolution yet to be ambushed by lurking revolutionary bandits, and the fruits reaped by the inheritors of the alleged divine right following elections that had been run along the same old patterns. Then the vicious circle, which is widely recognized in our political terminology, would then set forth in motion.

As for the Sudanese elites who were endowed by Allah the bounty of knowledge and property for decades, after independence, have laid down the foundation for a modern state in the form of structures, systems, and institutions. Some of them had joined the far regions of the country and had built schools, factories, and railway lines, besides linking those regions to the civil public structure.

The great sacrifices for independence, the profound genuineness shown in building the welfare state, could not have been fulfilled without a political concept to be assimilated by the people to help set up the required state. We are currently at the threshold of the fortieth anniversary of independence, and set to have, for the first time, a glimpse of the features of the Constitution through which we aspire to organize our political life, and to establish new developments in our political relations and constitutional organs.

There is no permanent constitution that is not liable for change since charters are governed by the developments of life with its renewed challenges, but we had achieved no stability through any constitutional order that had satisfied our need to develop our country along conceptual and reconciliatory track.

The latest decades of independence have almost been tantamount to a retrogression in Sudan's spiritual and material achievement. The politicians had gone to far in their struggle for power which put them far from shouldering their urgent political responsibilities for the interest of the people. The Sudanese elites had pursued their personal interests without regard to the vital issues of their country. Individuals and groups of qualified professionals had left the country in pursuit of better material rewards, leaving their own country in backwardness. The damage had even reached the Armed Forces, who were regarded as the last resort entrusted to preserve Sudan's unity and honour.

It is true that the Sudan, a country rich in its apparent and potential resources, as well as its vast fertile lands, is targeted and envied by lurking enemies who feel hurt to see Sudan as a unified, advanced and influential country.

So, they chose to conspire against the Sudan, exploited the war in the south as a pretext for tightening the embargo. They provide to the aberrant outlaws movements, the means of material power and faulty wishes that the Sudan should be divided into states where each (independent) state would block the way of the other. Thus the country would finally be dragged into conflict to keep it mutilated and maimed.

That was why the revolution was a salvation from total collapse, gaining its legitimacy from the Sudanese peoples, who had been witnesses to the total failure and who aspire for a better life; it would lead a struggle in which the Sudan could be an advanced country or never. By establishing our independent system, we refer to all our experiences; democracy is no longer a slogan, but has been relayed by states; we have chosen to adopt the system because it was the best to govern a country as vast as ours. Besides it is the most commensurate with the nature of the Sudanese society, in its prime social units, whether a tribe, a sect, a quarter, or a village. Those units are aware of the politics of governing since they settle their disputes in a manner that lies closer to the spirit of justice and reconciliation. It is also the most fair system to adopt in order to ensure equity between the centre and the regions as regards power and wealth sharing.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

We have selected the federal system as an imperative, not in response to a bargain with foreign powers, or in concession or flattery to a domestic power, but to ensure that every individual, group or identity should shoulder their responsibilities. Thus, the local council is a leader responsible for its subjects, the province is a leader which [is] responsible for its subjects, the state is a leader responsible for its subjects, the federal government is a leader by planning and coordination between all these responsibilities.

The people have responded, thanks to Allah, with this choice as the ideal option for all the popular sectors. The Sudan has now become a ground for completion through good deeds, so it aspires, as far as it is availed the opportunity, to refer most of the public action initiatives to the society, by introducing the society [word indistinct] leader while the government becomes part of its dimensions. The society is expected to pose a model, to other societies of the world, in its religiousness, knowledge and culture.

The real state of affairs in the Sudan is about to become so, as religiousness is deepening and expanding among the youth and women and exchanged between the young and the elderly. Religion revives in the loyal hearts prior to reaping its fruits of good deeds on earth.

The issue of jihad, as well, to which people come rushing, poses a picture which highlights once more the model posed by the prophet's companions and the first disciples, after it had been tarnished in the hearts of the believers, and its commemoration was dead in real life for so many centuries.

The Sudan is nowadays filled with the shrills of appreciation to the martyrs in anticipation of Allah's reward as essence of human beings is greater than their existence. Allah is the greatest against all those challenges; Allah is our protector and on him we rely.

The energies staged by jihad were not energies of destruction as rumoured by those whom Allah had obscured their minds, but they were energies of responsive, daring and nonchalant life which will soon emerge in the near future. All energies have been directed to reconstruction, yet some have been directed to the projects of peace from within.

The evil aggression perpetrated against Sudan will not hurt the Sudan, Allah willing, until it feeds on its own challenges which rushed Sudanese citizens from everywhere to the southern territories. The south is no longer a lost jungle which is seen only by adventurers coming from the far Western world. The south today is full of marks and landmarks, memories and epics made by the Sudanese citizens. These experiences will prepare the south to the forthcoming peace, and an honourable life worthy of those who had waged jihad.

Al-Bashir Gives Go-Ahead for Elections

EA0101201496 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The president of the Republic, Staff Lieutenant General 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, has directed that preparations for the holding of national assembly and presidential elections be embarked on immediately. He said this when he received a copy of the general electoral register from the National Electoral Commission. Staff Lt. Gen. 'Umar al-Bashir called on the registered citizens and members of the public to fully exercise their constitutional right in the process of nomination, voting, and participation in national action and the construction of Sudan. The president of the Republic said that the new political system is the suitable alternative to the totalitarian pluralistic system of governance, pointing out that the new system allows for real democracy, and learning from old experiences.

Minister on Elections, Opposition, Eritrea, Hala'ib

NC3112213295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 31 Dec 95

[Telephone interview with Muhammad Ahmad Salim, state minister and legal adviser to the National Assembly, in Khartoum, by Jihad al-'Idan, in Tehran; date not given; from the "News and Reports" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-'Idan] Minister Muhammad Ahmad Salim, you have invited the Sudanese opposition to participate in the presidential and parliamentary elections. How was the invitation received?

[Salim] As you said, the political leadership invited the brother oppositionists at home and abroad to join the national ranks. So far, there has been no clear response, but we expect a response when we embark on the election process. We invited them to participate in the elections by running for the presidency and the National Assembly or by voting for their representatives. The elections will be held in the near future. The real test of the response will be seen during the period of nomination and voting for the National Assembly and the presidency.

By the way, some people in the opposition daily respond favorably to our invitation, but this is not being given much publicity. Many people from southern Sudan are returning to the homeland and laying down their arms. Some important opposition leaders have arrived

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

in recent months. But if you are talking about the known opposition figures, we have not yet received clear signs from some of them. Nevertheless, we hope God will guide them into the right path and help them make the right decision of returning to their homeland and stopping the harm to the interests of their country and people. We hope they will return to help in the building of Sudan.

[Al-'Idan] Minister Muhammad Ahmad Salim, how do you view and explain the tension that Eritrea created in the Red Sea region and Horn of Africa?

[Salim] We believe that Eritrea agreed to be a tool in the hand of Zionism, Israel, and the arrogant states. It is now implementing a scheme to shake the region's stability and distract nationalist and pan-Arab countries from their march. As you know, Sudan assisted Eritrea a great deal and helped the Eritrean people achieve their independence and engage in the longest liberation war in Africa. And yet, the Eritrean regime showed ingratitude toward the Sudanese people and government. Sudan is still hosting millions of Eritreans. So Eritrea agreed to play the role of an agent in the region in return for American and Israeli aid; as you know it is a poor country. Eritrea is now creating tension with fraternal Yemen over the Hanish islands, and before that it fabricated border problems with Sudan. And now it is actually participating, through mercenaries, in the Ugandan attack against southern Sudan. In the battles with the invading forces, the Sudanese forces found bodies of Eritreans among the dead. The Sudanese media published their names, identities, and places of work and residence.

[Al-'Idan] Mr. minister, what is the situation with Egypt now regarding the Hala'ib triangle?

[Salim] All attempts by the Sudanese Government to contain the conflict through arbitration and bilateral negotiations were rejected by the Egyptian side. The Egyptian regime is trying to impose the status quo. They are gradually Egyptianizing the region, believing that force or Sudan's preoccupation with other issues may ultimately give them a right to Hala'ib. But this is impossible. There are no positive developments from the Egyptian side. They are strengthening their armed presence in Hala'ib each day. They are (?forcing) inhabitants to take Egyptian nationality and they are expelling the Sudanese citizens who fail to respond to them; they throw them out into the open and kick them out of Hala'ib. The Sudanese Government's attempts — it called for arbitration and for bilateral talks — were all rejected by the Egyptians. The current and former Sudanese foreign ministers traveled to Egypt six or seven times while the Egyptian foreign minister failed to come to Khartoum to revive the activity of the bilateral committee on Hala'ib.

[Al-'Idan] Thank you Muhammad Ahmad Salim, Sudanese minister of state and legal adviser to the National Assembly, for this important interview.

[Salim] Thank you.

MENA Reports Clashes Between Extremists, Police

NC0201211096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2020 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 2 Jan (MENA) — Sudanese security sources have said that interrogations of the Sudanese al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah [Repudiation and Renunciation] group members who were arrested on 31 December have confirmed that there is a link between them and the group of Muhammad al-Khulayfi, who attacked the al-Ansar Mosque in the al-Thawrah area in Omdurman last year. In that attack more than 20 Sudanese people were killed and more than 30 others were wounded. In a statement to MENA, these sources said that it has been confirmed that al-Khulayfi, who was tried and executed last year, met with the youths of this group whose ages range between 15 and 20 years in the al-Kalkalat [as transliterated] area in the Jabal al-Awliya' Governorate south of Khartoum.

These sources also noted that in the past two months, the police monitored information that a number of students and people used to assemble in the al-Kalkalat area and deliver sermons holding the entire society as infidel. This indicates that they belong to the al-Takfir wa al-Hijrah group. These sources said that this group completely disappeared in the area during December and reemerged in Wad Madani in the al-Jazirah district and [clashed] with the police.

According to a statement released by the Sudanese interior ministry yesterday, the police exchanged fire with this group in Wad Madani in al-Jazirah district. The exchange of fire left one policeman and eight members of the group dead and others injured, and ten members were arrested. These detainees are being interrogated.

Government: Refugees Repatriated to Ethiopia

EA3012173295 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The repatriation of 3,633 Ethiopian refugees from (Twawawah) camp in al-Qadarif state to prepared camps inside Ethiopian territory within the voluntary return program has been completed.

Mr. al-Baqir Nasr al-Din, the coordinator of the refugees' voluntary return in the eastern states, said in

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

a statement to SUNA that the repatriation processes are proceeding with regularity. He said the work had been achieved through coordination between the government and the authorities in Sudan and Ethiopia and with UNHCR cooperation.

Statement Denies Ill-Treatment of Ethiopian Refugees

EA3112172595 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Sudan has rejected Ethiopian claims that it tortured and massacred Ethiopian refugees living in Sudan. A Foreign Ministry statement rejects these Ethiopian claims and points out that Ethiopia has no moral basis from which to (?judge) the human rights of refugees. Refugees in Sudan receive exemplary treatment, as acknowledged by the African and international communities, the statement stresses, adding that refugees are a source of pride for the Sudanese nation in that it shares its daily bread with Ethiopian refugees.

The statement called on the Ethiopian regime to substantiate its claims, which the statement described as hollow. The statement said the Ethiopian regime, whose hands were stained by the blood of Sudanese nationals such as Dr. Abdullah al-Ja'li and Muhammad al-Fatih — both treacherously assassinated by the Ethiopian security apparatus in August — was not in a position to give lectures on the treatment of refugees.

The Foreign Ministry statement disclosed that the aims of the Ethiopian regime's provocations were to divert attention from its failure to feed its people: to obstruct the voluntary refugee repatriation program in violation of the Ethiopian policy of choice; [word indistinct] plan to destabilize Sudan with Ethiopia acting as one of its components to work toward bringing about something which would justify hostile action against Sudan; and to seek to deprive Sudan of one of the sources of its pride and greatness, namely self- reliance and good hospitality to refugees, by (?distorting) the facts to the refugees.

The statement said Sudan was again requesting the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and all relevant quarters to guarantee a complete voluntary repatriation of Ethiopian refugees as soon as possible, because that would expose the true motives of the Ethiopian regime.

Opposition Radio: Officials Seeking British Asylum

EA0201220796 (Clandestine) Voice of Sudan National Democratic Alliance Radio in Arabic 1715 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Abd al-[name indistinct] Muhammad Ahmad, the minister of education [as heard] in the Islamic Front government and its ambassador in Italy with the rank of minister, has requested political asylum in Britain.

Equally, 'Abd al-Wahab al-Afandi, the Islamic Front's [word indistinct], close to Hasan al-Turabi and also his press attache in Britain and (?western) Europe and one of the most prominent members of the Islamic Front party, made a similar request seeking political asylum in Britain following the deteriorating political situation in the country.

Libyan Armed Forces Chief Arrives in Khartoum

LD0201105096 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0915 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Khartoum, 2 Jan [KUNA] — Colonel 'Abu-Bakr Yunis Jabir [colonel in chief of the Libyan Armed Forces] and his accompanying delegation arrived in Khartoum last night to take part in the meetings of the Sudanese National Congress and the celebrations marking the 40th anniversary of fraternal Sudan's independence. [passage omitted]

Col. Jabir is accompanied on this visit by the brother secretary of the General People's Committee for Unity.

In a statement to correspondents following his arrival, Col. Jabir expressed his and his delegation's happiness at the visit. [passage omitted]

Col. Jabir renewed the Great Jamahiriyah's keen interest in reinforcing the march of integration between the Great Jamahiriyah and fraternal Sudan and said: We are always seeking to create an all-embracing unity to include Libya, Egypt, and Sudan because it is the only way to check the imperialist-crusader-Western onslaught that is seeking to dismember the Arab homeland. [passage omitted]

Received by First Vice President

EA0201183596 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih, the first vice president of the republic, received at Khartoum airport in the evening on 1 January, a Libyan delegation led by Colonel Abu Bakr Yunus, member of the historic leadership of the First of September Revolution. He arrived in the country to share with the people their celebration of the 40th independence anniversary and the convening of the National Conference.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

In a statement to a correspondent, Col Abu Bakr Yunus confirmed the importance of continuing the steps to achieve integration between Sudan and the Libyan Jamahiriyah. He praised the Sudanese and Libyan peoples and their steadfastness in face of the obstacles imposed on them by hostile circles. He added that there must be coordination between the two countries to face targeting by the west.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Bahrain

Demonstrations, Clashes Continue for Fifth Day

NC0201192796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Bahraini people continued their protests against the government for the fifth day in a row. According to the report we received, great tension prevails in several Bahraini towns and villages that have been the scene of demonstrations and clashes with the security forces since Friday. Security forces have been heavily deployed around mosques and clubs in the quarters considered to be a stronghold of the opposition.

According to opposition sources, surrounding quarters and closing down some mosques caused spontaneous demonstrations and clashes with the so-called riot-combat forces. A number of people were wounded and dozens of others were apprehended. Shaykh 'Ali Salman, a prominent Bahraini opposition personality who had been deported from Bahrain last summer, told the Lebanese paper AL-SAFIR that the riot-combat forces on Friday surrounded the home of shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri and closed the al-Imam al-Sadiq Mosque in al-Diraz area, where he used to deliver the Friday sermon in the presence of a congregation of thousands.

Opposition sources said they may escalate the situation against the Bahraini authorities by making new demands, such as reforming the riot-combat forces led by British officer Ian Anderson. These forces are predominantly Pakistanis and are led by Arab officers from Jordan and Egypt. These sources said that these forces increased this year from 4,000 to 7,000 personnel, mostly Pakistanis. They do not speak Arabic and spend most of their years of service in isolated camps. These sources disclosed that during the recent clashes between the demonstrators and the security forces there were few Bahraini personnel and their task was limited to interpretation. These sources said that a new demand—reform of the judiciary and establishing a higher judicial council—was added to the list of the opposition demands in an endeavor to achieve independence for judicial authority.

Kuwait

Minister Against Proposed Security Center in Cairo

LD3012182595 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1511 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 30 Dec (KUNA) — Interior Minister Shaykh 'Ali al-Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah has said here: "Kuwait will not agree to a proposal on setting up a security center in Cairo relating to the Mediterranean countries." He pointed out: "There is a security center for the Arab League countries in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

In a statement to journalists after a meeting with the parliamentary interior and defense committee, Shaykh 'Ali said that the issue to be discussed by Arab interior ministers in Tunis this week concerns "the Mediterranean countries, and we are not among these countries." It is to be noted that the ninth session of the Arab interior ministers' council is due to be held in the Tunisian capital from 3 January for three days. Shaykh 'Ali said that the council will discuss a clause of great importance concerning the combating of terrorism, and that Kuwait "affirms the importance of this issue and of finding the means to combat terrorism in all its forms."

On the ability of citizens of Kuwait and Qatar to travel between the two countries by using Kuwaiti and Qatari identity cards, Shaykh 'Ali said: "Citizens of the two countries have been able to travel using these cards since the middle of this month." Shaykh 'Ali said that there are contacts among the United Arab Emirates [UAE] and between the UAE and Kuwait. "We are about to establish an implementation mechanism that would enable us to facilitate travel between us and these brotherly countries using identity cards. However, we have not been able to establish such a mechanism yet," Shaykh 'Ali said.

In reply to a question on the government's views on a parliamentary proposal to determine constituencies on the basis of population and geographic density, allowing for the numerical proportion of residents in each constituency, the interior minister said: "The amendment introduced by the government recently represents the government's views." The government modified a number of constituencies two months ago. These were the 15th, 17th, 21st, 22nd, 24th, and 25th constituencies.

Prime Minister Conveys Good Wishes to King Fahd

LD0201140696 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1312 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 2 Jan (KUNA) — Shaykh Sa'd al- 'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti heir apparent and prime minister, today held a telephone conversation with Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the Saudi National Guard, during which he was reassured about the health of King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the custodian of the two holy mosques.

During the telephone conversation Shaykh Sa'd conveyed the greetings and good health wishes of the

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Kuwaiti Amir Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, to the custodian of the two holy mosques.

Saudi Arabia

Ma'sari: 'Abdallah 'Not as Pro-American as Fahd'

BR0201132996 Milan CORRIERE DELLA SERA in Italian 2 Jan 96 p 9

[Report on phone interview with Dr. Muhammad Ma'sari, Legitimate Rights Defense Committee leader, in London, by Giovanni Santoro in Milan; date not given: "He Will Have To Deal With His Half-Brothers"]

[FBIS Translated Text] What is going on behind the facade of smiles and cheers of "long live the king" that has accompanied the transfer of power in a country which, with its reserves of 260 billion barrels (one fourth of the world's known deposits,) is the strongest oil producing nation on Earth? "A subtle power struggle between the princes," according to Dr. Muhammad Ma'sari, former physics lecturer at Riyadh University and now the exiled leader of the opposition movement known as the "Legitimate Rights Defense Committee," which comprises intellectuals and clerics critical of the inefficiency and corruption of the Saudi Arabian Government. "On the surface there will be no appreciable changes, but 'Abdallah will have to deal with his half-brothers, the other princes and sons of the founder of the dynasty, Ibn Sa'ud. They will try to weaken him somehow," we were told over the phone from London by Ma'sari, who claims to have sources in the senior royal bureaucracy.

'Abdallah is described as a tough traditionalist, less open to the West than King Fahd. "I would say that he is not as pro-American as Fahd," Ma'sari said, adding: "In August 1990 the prince was wisely opposed to Fahd's decision to invite foreign troops into Saudi Arabia in response to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait." "By opening up our country to the U.S. Army, Fahd revealed his anxiety about the inadequacy of the Saudi Armed Forces, on which billions and billions have been spent — and 'Abdallah realized this."

The opposition movement leader also identified 'Abdallah's most fearsome adversary — "Prince Sultan, the defense minister. Relations between the two are extremely tense. Sultan would like to oppose 'Abdallah openly, but he is well aware that he will also have to deal with the United States, which has an inalienable interest in the kingdom's stability."

Crown Prince Receives Eritrean Minister

LD0201122096 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the crown prince, deputy prime minister, and commander of the National Guard, received today at the royal court at al-Yamamah Palace Ali Said Abdalla, the Eritrean minister of internal affairs, and Salih Idris Kikya, the Eritrean deputy foreign minister.

The Eritrean minister of internal affairs delivered to the crown prince a written message to King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, the custodian of the two holy mosques, may God preserve him, from Eritrean President Isaias Afwerki. [passage omitted]

National Deficit 'Nearly Halved' in 1995

NC0201135596 Paris AFP in English 1339 GMT 2 Jan 96

[By Nadim Kawash]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Jan 2 (AFP) — An improvement in oil prices nearly halved Saudi Arabia's actual budget deficit in 1995 as it pressed ahead with reforms to repair economic damage caused by weak crude prices, bankers said Tuesday.

The actual deficit was estimated at around eight billion riyals (2.13 billion dollars) by the end of 1995 compared with a projected shortfall of 15 billion riyals (four billion dollars), they said.

"The main reason for this large decline in the deficit is the improvement in oil prices in 1995 and the government's adherence to the spending level it had set at the start of the year," a Saudi banker told AFP by telephone.

The 1995 deficit was one of the lowest shortfalls in Saudi Arabia since its budget began to suffer from gaps after the decline in oil prices in the mid-1980s.

It compares with a deficit of 10 billion dollars in 1994 and as high as 33 billion dollars in 1991, when Riyadh paid more than 50 billion dollars to finance an allied offensive to retake Kuwait from Iraqi invasion forces.

Oil prices averaged nearly 17 dollars in 1995 compared with around 15.50 dollars in 1994.

An increase of one dollar means more than 2.5 billion dollars in extra revenue for Saudi Arabia, which produces around eight million barrels per day (bpd), of which more than seven million bpd are exported.

Bankers cited a rise in petrochemical earnings as another reason for the lower deficit in 1995.

Such earnings surged to 4.9 billion Saudi riyals (1.3 billion dollars) in the first nine months of 1995, higher than the record income of 4.2 billion riyals (1.12 billion dollars) for the whole of 1994.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Saudi Arabia on Monday [1 January] released its 1996 budget, which underscored its commitment to reforms by putting a brake on spending to bridge the gap.

The 1996 budget does not mention the estimated reduction of the deficit in the past year, nor does it seem to be calculated on the basis of higher oil prices.

According to economists, expected revenues in 1995 were based on an oil price of between 14 and 15 dollars per barrel.

Spending for 1996 was forecast at as low as 40 billion dollars, equivalent to the 1995 expenditure, while revenues were projected slightly lower at 35.1 billion dollars. This created a deficit of nearly 4.9 billion dollars.

But bankers said the deficit, which would be covered through domestic borrowing, was manageable given its low ratio to the Gross Domestic Product.

"The 1996 deficit is estimated at around 3.2 percent of the GDP. This is not big in global standards," one banker said.

"It could have been cut if spending was trimmed further. But that could be counter-productive as the government sector accounts for nearly one third of the economy. Too much low [as received] could tackle the deficit but hurt growth."

Saudi Arabia slashed spending to 40 billion dollars from 52 billion dollars in 1993 and more than 60 billion dollars per year in the early 1980s, as part of reforms that include rationalisation of expenditure and privatisation.

The kingdom, which produces 12 percent of the world's oil supplies and possesses a quarter of the global crude reserves, has made clear it would push ahead with the reforms to hasten growth and reach a deficit-free budget.

On Monday, the statement said growth rates nearly trebled to 4.3 percent in 1995 from 1.4 percent in 1994 due to strong performance in government and oil sectors and higher industrial activity by the private sector.

Details of the budget included only around 75 billion riyals (20 billion dollars) in allocations for education, communication and other sectors.

The statement did not mention the remaining budget allocations or how much was earmarked for defence, the main beneficiary of the annual spending.

"According to our information, defence spending is almost equivalent to that in 1995," a Saudi banker said. Defence spending accounted for 32.6 percent of the budget in 1995 and around 33.1 percent in 1994, according to official figures.

Finance Ministry Statement on Coming Fiscal Year

LD0201182296 Riyadh SPA in English
2032 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Jan 1, SPA — The Ministry of Finance and National Economy released here today a statement on the state budget for the fiscal year 1416/1417 [1996]. The statement is as follows:

On the occasion of issuing of the state budget for the new fiscal year 1416/1417, the Ministry of Finance and National Economy is pleased to shed some lights on the current economic status and the financial program of this year's budget. First: the general economic position:

The Saudi economy has maintained its moderate growth during the past year of 1415-1416 h. Available data indicates that the economy grew by 4.3 per cent in the current prices, compared to only 1.4 per cent growth rate in the past year.

This attributes to the good growth rate achieved by both government and oil sectors, in addition to good growth by the private sector's industrial activity, whose growth rate was estimated at 7.5 per cent.

The oil and non-oil exports have achieved good rates of growth due to improvement of international oil prices, and to the success of Saudi non-oil exports in penetrating international markets. The value of these exports is projected to reach sr [Saudi riyals] 23.8 billion this year, an increase of 42 per cent compared with last year's.

This performance has its effect on the Saudi external current account which improved despite the increase of imports. External account deficit is estimated to curtail from sr 34 billion in 1414/1415 fiscal year to sr 18.9 billion in this current 1415/1416 [1995] fiscal year.

It is worth noting that the inflation rate in the Kingdom continued to be low as a result of openness of the Saudi market and the prevailing competitive environment.

The price and charge increases of some commodities and services at the begining of the past year have led - for one time only - to a five per cent increase in the cost of living index. But retail prices of imports declined slightly, and indications are that the non-oil gross national product (GNP) deflator would not exceed 3.5 per cent.

This generally good performance of Saudi economy — despite economic adjustment to the international oil

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

market conditions — has helped other sectors of the economy to continue improving. The banking sector, for example, maintains its excellent profit rates, improves its efficiency, and increases its capital base which reached sr 34.4 billion, or 17.6 per cent of banking total deposits.

Second: the national budget for 1416/1417

The following is a summary of the national budget and the appropriation for the main sectors:

1. Total revenues from all sources for the fiscal year 1416/1417 are estimated at sr 131.5 billion.

2. Public expenditure for the fiscal year 1416/1417 will be sr 150 billion. Accordingly, the fiscal deficit for the same year is estimated at sr 18.5 billion.

3. Government spending covers salaries and wages of all civil servants, administrative and office expenses, expenditures for operation and maintenance, construction projects and other government procurement as well as social subsidies.

The following is a brief summary of the appropriations for the main development and public service sectors in 1416/1417:

a. Education sector:

expenditures for this sector will be sr 27,626,737,000.

b. Health services and social development:

expenditures for this sector will be sr 13,329,290,000.

c. Municipality services and water authorities expenditures for this sector will be sr 5,378,269,000.

d. Transportation and communication sector:

expenditures for this sector will be sr 9,194,608,000.

e. Infrastructure, industry and electricity sector:

expenditures for this sector will be sr 6,107,622,000.

f. Domestic subsidies:

expenditures for domestic subsidies will be sr 6,858,507,000.

g. Specialized development institutions:

in addition to the government expenditures outlined above; the specialized development institutions (the industrial development fund, the real estate development fund, the agricultural bank and the credit bank) will continue to provide loans to private projects. The loans provided by these institutions are estimated at sp [as received] 5,888,000,000 which exceed the level provided by these institutions in the previous year by more than sp [as received] 500 million.

The support, both directly and indirectly, provided by these institutions to the economic development, as well as the investment activities carried out by major companies such as Saudi Aramco, Petromin and Sabic represent, in addition to the national budget, an important impetus to economic activity and capital formation.

Finally, on the instructions of custodian of the two holy mosques and the crown prince, the budget has been prepared. The objective is to provide adequate support for economic development, and to maintain, at the same time, financial stability which is essential for sustainable growth.

Al-'Attar: Budget Reflects 'Wise Policy' of King

LD0201132496 Riyadh SPA in English
1223 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Jan 2, SPA — The minister of planning, Dr. 'Abd-al-Wahhab al-'Attar has said the budget for 1417-1417 [dates as received] reflected the wise policy being pursued by Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and his crown prince in order to accomplish the economic stability in the kingdom.

In a statement to Saudi Press Agency, Dr. al-'Attar said the supreme directives reaffirmed the importance of the combined efforts of all officials in the country to lessen the governmental spending through improving the administrative and productive abilities of the governmental organs which would lead to a decline in expenditure and preserve the level of services and their availability.

Dr. al-'Attar said there is a clear and growing index that the policy of rationalization had proved its effectiveness and had accomplished positive results which, in turn, had contributed in supporting the country's economic stability. This policy has attracted appreciation, recognition and analysis by several international associations and economic establishments.

He said this year's budget focused on more spending on the development of human resources through education and training.

Dr. al-'Attar added that the social and health sectors had also been given priority in the current budget. 'This reflects the attention of the government towards this welfare sectors.'

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

He said the figures in the current budget affirmed, in general terms, the kingdom's top attention under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and his crown prince, to build up the national productive capabilities and the national cadres.

'This year's budget is a practical translation of the government's resolve to accomplish economic and social stability as well as lift up the country and its citizens in all spheres,' Dr. al-'Attar said.

Royal Decrees Issued on Budget

LD0201180796 Riyadh SPA in English 1946 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Riyadh, Jan 1, SPA — Three royal decrees were issued on Monday [1 January] approving the state's general budget for the fiscal year 1416/1417 AH [1996] as well as the budgets of the municipalities, water departments and general establishments.

Decree M/11

After reading the Articles 72, 73, 76 and 78 of the basic system of government under the royal decree Number A/90, dated 27.8.1412, the Articles 25, 26, and 27 of the system of the Council of Ministers under the royal decree A/13, dated 3.3.1414 and the royal decree Number M/6, dated 12.4.1407, which stipulates the beginning of the state's fiscal year on the tenth of Capricorn every year as well as the statements pertaining to the revenues and expenditures of the state for the fiscal year and the decision of the Cabinet Number 119, dated 10/8/1416, we order the following:

First:

The revenues of the state for the fiscal year 1416/1417 AH are estimated to be SR [Saudi riyals] 131,500,000,000. An amount of SR 150,000,000,000 is approved for expenditure during the fiscal year 1416/1417 AH.

Second:

The revenues are to be met according to the financial systems and all are to be paid to the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) and its branches for the account of the Ministry of Finance and National Economy

Third:

The Ministry of Finance and National Economy will be authorized to obtain loans for meeting the gap between the expenditures and revenues of the fiscal year 1416/1417 AH

Fourth:

The expenditures should be dispersed according to the budget and regulations pertaining to it.

Fifth:

a - Transfers in the allocations of the chapters and branches of the budget should be through the approval of the premier in the light of a joint report submitted by the concerned minister, or the head of the administration of the independent budget and the minister of finance and national economy

b - Transfers among the articles of the first chapter and the second chapter take place through a decision from the concerned minister or the head of the administration of the independent budget provided that the sum to be transferred should not exceed half of the sum originally allocated in the budget, with the exception of the articles of salaries which should only be transferred according to the previous paragraph of this article.

6 - It is not permitted to use the appropriation except in the sphere it is allocated for, or to issue a payment order in a way exceeding the appropriation specified in the budget, or to commit any expenditure that is not allocated in the budget.

7 - It is not permitted to issue any decision or conclude any contract in a way that entails any obligation on a following fiscal year with the exception of

a - Contracts that are of continual or periodical nature of implementation like the contracts of lease, employment, services, food ration supplies, contracts of consultative services that require allocations every year.

b - Import contracts whose costs are approved in the second chapter provided that the value of the contract does not exceed the appropriated sum in this fiscal year, and no commitments are linked to the approved allocation, and no sums within the limit of the contract are shifted, and the period of the implementation of the contract should not exceed the duration of the next fiscal year.

c - Contract of the projects that cannot be divided provided that commitment should be made within the limits of the approved expenditures for each project.

8 - If it appears during the current fiscal year that some funds are subject to commitment in the past years in a way that exceeds the approved allocation, then the case should be submitted to the Cabinet if the excess in expenditure was due to any unjustified act, otherwise the minister of finance and national economy will be

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

authorized to release these funds from the appropriations of the current fiscal year.

9 - It is not at all allowed to appoint or promote employees and workers except in the posts approved by this budget with the conditions and situations in the applied systems.

10 - With the exception of the appointment of ministers, no new posts or grades will be created other than approved in this budget, except the posts that are created in line with the conditions included in the temporary employment system.

It is not allowed to amend the approved grades in this budget through promotion, but they can be demoted by a decision from the general president of the Civil Service Bureau in line with a recommendation from a committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Civil Service Bureau and the concerned authority.

11 - administrative units of each authority are approved in accordance with the general budget and cannot be amended except with a decision by the Higher Committee of Administrative Reform.

The titles of posts can be modified in line with the requirements of the job classification rules by a decision from the president of the Civil Service Bureau in the line with the recommendation submitted by a committee comprising representatives of the Ministry of Finance and National Economy, the Civil Service Bureau and the concerned authority.

12 - The minister of finance and national economy will issue the required instructions for the implementation of this budget within the limits of the regulations stipulated in this decree.

13 - The deputy premier and the ministers are to carry out this decree.

Decree No. M/12

After reading the Articles 72, 73, 76 and 78 of the basic rule system under the royal decree Number A/90, dated 27.8.1412, the articles 25, 26, and 27 of the system of the Cabinet under the royal decree Number A/13, dated 3/3/1414, and the royal decree that stipulates the beginning of the state's fiscal year on the tenth of Capricorn every year as well as the statements pertaining to the revenues and expenditures of the municipalities and water departments for the fiscal year 1416/1417 AH, and the decision of the Cabinet Number 120, dated 10/8/1416, we order the following

1 - The expenditures of the municipalities and water departments for the fiscal year 1416/1417 AH are estimated at SR 5,378,269,000.

2 - The revenues of the municipalities and water departments for the fiscal year 1416/1417 AH are estimated at SR 852,000,000.

3 - The difference between the direct revenues and expenditures amounting to SR 4,526,269,000 is to be approved in the state's general budget.

4 - The municipalities and water departments collect their revenues in line with the set regulations and the concerned authorities should follow up the implementation in this respect.

5 - Expenditures are to be dispersed according to the relevant financial systems and rules.

6 - The rules stipulated in the Articles 5,6,7,8,9,10,11 and 12 of the royal decree Number M/11, dated on 10/8/1416, are to be valid for the budget of the municipalities and water departments.

7 - Surplus of the appropriations of the branch municipalities is to be transferred to the allocations of the branch municipalities with the approval of the premier in line with the recommendation of the minister of the municipal and rural affairs and the minister of finance and national economy.

8 - The minister of finance and national economy issues the required instructions for the implementation of the appropriations within the limits of the regulations stipulated in this decree.

9 - The crown prince and the ministers are to carry out the decree.

Royal decree No. M/13:

After reading the Articles 72, 73, 76 and 78 of the basic rule system, under the royal decree Number A/90, dated 27/8/1412, and the articles 25, 26, and 27 of the system of the Cabinet, under the royal decree Number A/13, dated 3/3/1414, as well as the royal decree Number M/6, dated 12/4/1407, which stipulates the beginning of the fiscal year on the tenth of Capricorn every year as well as the statements pertaining to the revenues and expenditures of the general establishments that have annexed budgets with the state's general budget for the fiscal year 1416/1417, and after reading the decision of the Cabinet Number 121, dated 10,8,1416, we order the following

a - Revenues and expenditures of the general establishments that have budgets annexed to the state's general budget for the fiscal year 1416/1417 have been projected as follows:

1 - The revenues and expenditures of the ports authority are projected at SR 511,899,000.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

2 - The revenues and expenditures of the national airlines (Saudia) are projected at SR 8,476,400,000. It is to collect its revenues and disperse its expenditures according to its system.

3 - The revenues and expenditures for the consolidated electricity corporation are projected at SR 610,474,000.

4 - The revenues of the general organization for grain silos and flour mills are projected at SR 2,514,000,000, while expenditures are estimated at SR 3,044,101,000.

5 - The revenues and expenditures of the general saline water conversion corporation are projected at SR 1,915,352,000.

6 - The revenues and expenditures of the Saudi Railway Organization (SRO) are projected at SR 175,327,000.

7 - The revenues and expenditures of the General Organization for Petroleum and Minerals are projected at SR 42,937,000.

8 - The revenues and expenditures of the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu are projected at SR 947,861,000.

9 - The revenues and expenditures of the Saudi Arabian Standards Organization (SASO) are projected at SR 39,330,000.

10 - The revenues and expenditures of King Sa'ud University are projected at SR 1,356,495,000.

11 - The revenues and expenditures of King 'Abd-al-'Aziz University are projected at SR 985,477,000.

12 - The revenues and expenditures of King Fahd Petroleum and Minerals University are projected at SR 301,971,000.

13 - The revenues and expenditures of Imam Mohammed Bin Sa'ud Islamic University are projected at SR 746,377,000

14 - The revenues and expenditures of the Islamic University in Madina are projected at SR 159,617,000.

15 - The revenues and expenditures of the King Faysal University are projected at SR 347,187,000.

16 - The revenues and expenditures of Um al-Qura University are projected at SR 487,302,000.

17 - The revenues and expenditures of the General Organization for Technical Education and Vocational Training are projected at SR 956,552,000.

18 - The revenues and expenditures of the King 'Abd-al-'Aziz City for Science and Technology are estimated at SR 256,162,000.

19 - The revenues and expenditures of the Public Administration Institute are projected at SR 135,753,000.

20 - The revenues and expenditures of the Saudi Red Crescent Society are projected at SR 138,248,000.

21 - The revenues and expenditures of the General Organization for Military Industries are projected at SR 383,159,000.

22 - The revenues of the Pensions Fund are projected at SR 17,722,000,000, while expenditures are projected at SR 8,289,140,000. The fund's revenues will be deposited in its account at the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency (SAMA) and the expenditures will be withdrawn from the account according to regulations.

Secondly, surplus revenues or allocations for expenditures are to be returned at the end of the year to the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency.

Thirdly, revenues are to be collected and expenditures dispersed in accordance with relevant regulations and instructions.

Fourthly, with the exception of the Saudi Arabian Airlines, which prepares its budget in line with commercial auditing regulation, the budgets of all other public organizations and institutions will be subject to the rules stipulated in Articles 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the royal decree No. M/11, dated 10/5/1416 H, which approved the state general budget for the fiscal year 1416/1417 H.

Fifthly, the minister of finance and national economy is to issue necessary directives to carry out this order within the limits stipulated in this decree.

Sixthly, HRH [his royal highness] the deputy premier and the ministers are to carry out this decree in their respective fields.

United Arab Emirates

UK Defense Secretary Portillo Arrives for Visit

Received by Defense Minister al-Maktum

JN3012165895 Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates Radio Network in Arabic 0930 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness General Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Rashid al Maktum, Dubayy's heir apparent and minister of defense, received at his highness the ruler of Dubayy's office today His Excellency Michael Portillo, British secretary of defense. They discussed relations between the United Arab Emirates and

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

the United Kingdom, especially cooperation in the defense field. They also reviewed the situation in the region, the peace process in the Middle East, and the recent Dayton agreement on peace in Bosnia- Herzegovina.

His Excellency Michael Portillo arrived in the country this morning on a visit that will last one day.

Portillo: Countries Close to Defense Pact

NC3112154595 Paris AFP in English 1518 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Dec 31 (AFP) — Britain and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are close to signing a defence agreement, British Defence Secretary Michael Portillo said Sunday [31 December].

Portillo, making his first trip to the emirates since his appointment in July, said he had discussed the pact with armed forces chief of staff Shaykh Muhammad Bin Zayid Al Nuhayyan during a 90-minute meeting on Sunday.

"We have made enormous progress in the draft agreement and I hope it will be signed soon," he told reporters in Abu Dhabi.

Asked whether it would provide for military protection of the UAE, he said: "The agreement contains a very clear commitment to the UAE's security."

The agreement, under negotiation for more than a year, would be the UAE's third defence pact with a western nation after its accords with France and the United States. The three countries are the main economic partners of the UAE and its leading arms suppliers. All have competed to win arms sales contracts over the past few years as the UAE seeks to beef up its army.

The UAE is locked in a dispute with Iran over the strategic Gulf islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunbs. Several western countries have backed the UAE's bid to seek international arbitration after the failure of bilateral negotiations over the disputed islands.

Portillo said he had also discussed arms sales to the emirates, training of UAE troops, joint exercises and service personnel on loan to the Gulf country, which has a population of around 2.2 million.

"We understand that the UAE looks to its partners for long-term relationship and commitment. The agreement to be signed shortly will provide a basis for a wider cooperation between Britain and the UAE," he said.

Asked whether he expected Britain to win arms sales contracts in the UAE, he said: "We are interested in supplying a range of equipment to the UAE. We will compete very hard with our best equipment. We understand the needs of the UAE and we back up the purchases of defence equipment."

Portillo declined to say whether Britain was competing along with France and the United States to sell to the UAE some 80 long-range strike aircraft. But he said his talks covered the supply of advanced versions of Tornado jets. "The next stage is to arrange for the Tornado to be demonstrated here."

Britain lost out to France in a 235-million-dollar helicopter deal struck with the UAE early this year. But it hopes to win a contract to supply at least two frigates to the emirates with a value of more than one billion dollars.

Portillo said the UAE was of "extreme importance" to Britain as it has more than 35,000 citizens in the emirates and its exports top one billion pounds sterling (1.6 billion dollars) per year.

He said he would make the first visit by a British defence secretary to Japan since World War II as part of a three-nation Asian trip that also includes Philippines and South Korea. "Japan is emerging as a key player in world peace. My visit is an opportunity for me to discuss a wide range of issues," said the secretary, who will stay through the New Year in Abu Dhabi before flying to Manila on Monday.

Paper Views Portillo's Visit Negatively

LD3112161295 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] British Defense Minister Michael Portillo arrived in the UAE on Saturday 30 December for an official visit to that country. He has reportedly met with Emirate's [heir apparent] Prince Muhammad Bin-Rashid Al Maktum, who is also the defense minister of the UAE.

The British foreign minister [as heard] has conferred with his UAE counterpart on ways of enhancing military cooperation and the trend of peace in the Middle East. Regular visits to the Middle East by British high-ranking officials is indicative of London's new moves in the region and the British Government's inclination to play a more vital role in the Middle East peace talks.

Earlier, the British foreign minister visited a number of Middle East countries and talked with the leaders on various issues. The British foreign minister, in his trip to the UAE will focus, more than anything else, on military cooperation and sale of weapons to that country. This of course does not mean that the British Government has ended its provocations or stopped efforts to create cynicism in the region.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

In fact, the Western states' domination in the region is only guaranteed through discord and enmity that they create in the Middle East. They also sell their left-over weapons through this. Dominance-seeking countries are well aware that in the Middle East devoid of any war or misunderstanding their interests are not preserved. Therefore they are doing their best to prevent close ties between regional states. These efforts are reaching their peak after the victory of the Islamic revolution, which has targeted the illegitimate interests of the Western countries in the Middle East. Now, Western states are doing their best to create suspicions among the regional countries to picture a hostile and incorrect image of Iran. The trip of the British defense minister to the area is assessed to be in the same connection.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

'High-Level' Iranian Delegation Visits Kurdistan

Delegation's Agenda Reported

NC3012155695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A large high-ranking Iranian delegation led by 'Ali Agha Mohammadi, representative of Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani and official in charge of the Iraqi affairs office, is visiting Kurdistan. The delegation includes a large number of officials in charge of government political and economic departments and establishments. Mohammadi and his delegation members are scheduled to meet with the leaders of the two main parties in Kurdistan as well as leaders of the other Iraqi and Kurdish parties. The delegation will meet with various sectors, including university professors and religious leaders.

AL-ITTIHAD newspaper reported today that the delegation intends to offer various plans to the Kurdish government to facilitate the travel and movement of citizens and goods between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Kurdistan and to pave the way for cooperation in the fields of trade, construction, and politics to serve the interests of the Iranian and Kurdish peoples.

Iranian Envoy Meets Barzani

JN3012202295 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1800 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] At the invitation of Mas'ud Barzani, head of our party [Kurdistan Democractic Party], Aqa Mohammadi, representative of the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, arrived in Kurdistan on 30 December at the head of a ranking government delegation.

The delegation was welcomed by brother Mas'ud Barzani in the Diyala district at 1130 on 30 December. They arrived at the Hajj 'Umran border post at 0830 today. [passage omitted]

The delegation members arrived at their place of residence at 1330 today. Brother Mas'ud Barzani hosted a luncheon in honor of the guest delegation. The first bilateral meeting was held in the office of the head of our party at 1600 today. They discussed the cordial and historic relations between the two parties. The two sides emphasized the need to enhance these relations in service of the interests of the two neighbor people.

The meetings are expected to continue in the following days.

The guest delegation under Aqa Mohammadi, representative of Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, met with a group of men of religion from Kurdistan on the evening of the same day.

Barzani Praises 'Positive' Talks

LD0301092696 Tehran IRNA in English 0757 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 3, IRNA — Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) chief Mas'ud Barzani said the outcome of his talks with an Iranian delegation was positive.

In an interview with the English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' printed today, he commented on Tehran's mediation in the talks between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the KDP, underlining, "Iran has played an effective role in the past and can play a crucial role in the future."

He stressed the outcome of the meeting depended on the intention of the two sides, adding the KDP has proven its good will but the other party has, thus far, not shown its good intentions.

As for the talks to be held in Amman by groups opposed to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn, Barzani said he would not participate in the meeting although he received an invitation from King Husayn of Jordan.

"Before we participate in talks, the role of each group in post-Saddam Iraq should be cleared," he asserted.

He also denied that the U.S. was using Irbil airport for military purposes.

IRNA Reports Delegation's Visit

LD3112123595 Tehran IRNA in English 1114 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 31, IRNA — An Iranian delegation led by 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi arrived in Iraqi Kurdistan for talks with heads of Kurdish parties and groups to end fighting and bloodshed in northern Iraq.

The Iranian delegation was dispatched following repeated invitations by Kurdish parties and appeals by Muslim people of the region.

The delegation was welcomed by leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Mas'ud Barzani and leader of the revolutionary Hizballah of Iraqi Kurdistan Shaykh Adham Barzani.

Mas'ud Barzani told the Iranian delegation in Sallaheddin that the Muslim people of Iraqi Kurdistan highly appreciate Iran's humanitarian efforts.

He added that restoration of peace and tranquility to the Iraqi Kurdistan was essential and urged Iran to keep up its efforts.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

The head of the Iranian delegation told ulema in Diyana that Iran has considered support for and assistance to Muslim people of Iraqi Kurdistan as its duty and will not spare any efforts in this connection.

Aqa Mohammad said all parties are duty-bound to join efforts to remove the root causes of clashes in the region.

Meanwhile Shaykh Adham Barzani said there were political motives behind Western aide to the Iraqi Kurds and called for continued Iranian assistance and support.

Delegation Visits Towns Bordering Turkey

LD0101152296 Tehran IRNA in English 1442 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dahuk, Iraq, Jan. 1, IRNA — The Iranian peace delegation which is currently in Iraqi Kurdistan Sunday [31 December] afternoon visited the townships of Zakhu and Ibrahim Khalil, bordering Turkey.

The people of the said townships queued along the streets to welcome the Iranian delegation.

The Iranian delegation, headed by 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi, arrived in Iraqi Kurdistan on Saturday for talks with heads of Kurdish parties and groups to end fighting and bloodshed in northern Iraq.

Kurdish Ulema Urge Iran To Aid Peace Efforts

LD0201144596 Tehran IRNA in English 1425 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 2, IRNA — The Muslim Kurdish ulema of the northern Iraqi city of Dahuk, in a meeting Monday [1 January] morning with the head of an Iranian peace mission 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi called on Iran to continue its its peace efforts in the region.

Welcoming the Iranian delegation in the grand mosque of Dahuk, a local 'alim elaborated on grave economic situation of the Kurdish people living in the region. He said that the people of the region wants Iran to open its border with Iraqi Kurdistan.

In the same meeting, the political representative of the Iraq's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) underscored that Iran has done its best to support the Iraqi Kurdish people in areas of culture, trade and construction.

Meanwhile, Aqa Mohammadi told a gathering of the Muslim ulema that differentiating friends from foes is the most important task of Muslims.

He noted that the U.S. was busy hampering any peace efforts made by Iran across the globe, adding that enmity of Washington with Iran is due to the latter's support for the world Muslims.

He mentioned that no doubt the Islamic Republic of Iran is steadfast in its efforts to help restore peace and security to Iraqi Kurdistan.

Iran Vows Continued Efforts To End Fighting

LD0201113196 Tehran IRNA in English 1113 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dahuk, Northern Iraq, Jan. 2, IRNA — Head of Iranian delegation to Iraqi Kurdistan Ali Aqa Mohammadi stressed here Tuesday [2 January] that Iran's efforts to establish peace and tranquility in northern Iraq will continue.

Addressing students and professors of Dahuk University, Aqa Mohammadi said that exchange of academic and scientific delegations will help strengthen bilateral ties.

However, he noted, the first priority is removing the present problems and obstacles.

The Iranian delegation arrived in the Iraqi Kurdistan Saturday for talks with heads of Iraqi Kurdish parties and groups to find ways to end fighting and bloodshed in northern Iraq.

Ministry Condemns 'Official' Iranian Visit to North

JN0201210696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A Foreign Ministry spokesman made a statement today, Tuesday, 2 January 1996, to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, in which he commented on the illegal entry into northern Iraq of an official Iranian delegation, led by 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi, an expert at the Iranian Higher National Security Council, on Sunday, 31 December 1995, to hold contacts with rebel Kurdish cliques.

The spokesman said: The Government of the Republic of Iraq vehemently condemns the infiltration of the Iranian officials into Iraqi territory and their contact with outlawed Iraqi cliques. This is a flagrant violation of Iraq's sovereignty and interference in its domestic affairs.

The spokesman added: This Iranian conduct confirms the Iranian regime's insistence on interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs, getting involved with rebel cliques in northern Iraq, and helping them to commit further crimes against our Kurdish people, the national authority, and the security and safety of the country. In addition, this Iranian conduct shows the truth of the condemned double-standard policy pursued by the Iranian regime in this regard.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

While it condemns and attacks the contacts other foreign forces are holding with these cliques and views them as a threat to the region's security and stability, the Tehran regime is doing the same thing by holding similar rejected and suspected contacts.

The spokesman said that while stressing its categorical rejection of all weak justifications and excuses the Iranian regime uses to hold such contacts, the Government of the Republic of Iraq asserts that Tehran's evil behavior and position are no different from the positions of the other conspiring parties, which imagine that by contacting these desperate rebels in northern Iraq, they can score a gain at the expense of Iraq, which is standing fast in the face of aggression and hegemony.

Concluding, the spokesman said: We assert to the Iranian regime that its desperate and shortsighted attempts will undoubtedly backfire, because its pursuit of these reckless and dangerous tactics has set a precedent which can be exploited by any party to interfere in the Kurdish issue inside Iran. As a result, no repentance or weak justification will benefit the Iranian regime, because it has created a precedent and breached the sound regulations that govern the way states deal with each other, foremost of which is mutual respect for sovereignty and noninterference in others people's domestic affairs.

PUK Cites KDP Cease-Fire Violations in Kurdistan

NC3112161695 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Forces of the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] continue to violate the cease-fire agreement in Kurdistan. KURDISTAN NWAY says in today's issue that KDP forces on (Korak) mountain directed machine-gun fire at Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] positions on (Rashmaruq) mountain Friday [29 December] morning. On Friday night, the paper adds, KDP gunmen directed mortar shells and DShK machine-gun fire at Kurdistan permeshga positions in the (al-Shawayf) region, injuring pesmerga member Haydar Rasul 'Abd-al-Qadir. Hostile KDP forces yesterday directed DShK fire at Kurdistan peshmerga positions in the Ziyarat region.

The newspaper said two KDP members, Dulayr Sadir 'Abdallah and Sandar Rahman 'Abdallah from Irbil, left the KDP and joined PUK forces on Friday. Two other KDP members, Dara 'Ali Sa'id and Muhammad Ahmad Husayn from Sayyid Sadiq city, joined the Fourth Brigade of the Kurdistan peshmerga on Thursday.

UN Official on Agreement in PKK-KDP Talks

TA3112095895 London MED TV Television in Turkish 1730 GMT 30 Dec 95

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The cease-fire process in south Kurdistan is proceeding. It was reported that the meetings held between the PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan] and the KDP [Democratic Party of Kurdistan] in the aftermath of their mutual cease-fire are continuing. Da'ud Baghistani, the permanent UN representative of the International Committee for European Security and Cooperation who also acted as mediator in securing the cease-fire, issued a statement to our television in connection with the talks.

Baghistani said that the talks between the PKK and the KDP central committees started on 12 December and ended on 28 December. Baghistani explained that all the issues between the two sides were resolved and that possible causes for concern were eliminated. Stating that the sides conducted an assessment of the situation in the region, Baghistani added that agreement was reached. Remarking that both sides expressed their hope for a lasting peace, Baghistani added that the sides consider this development a stepping-stone toward peace throughout Kurdistan.

It was reported that the PKK and the KDP are expected to issue statements in the coming days.

Army Troops, Kurdish Area Residents Reportedly Clash

NC3112183095 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1500 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper KURDISTAN NWAY reported today that a military force belonging to the Baghdad regime and backed up by several armored vehicles last Wednesday [27 December] morning attacked the village of (Shadubis) close to (Aski Kalak) with the aim of robbing the citizens' possessions.

The paper added that the citizens clashed with the hostile force to defend themselves. A group of Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] gunmen stationed in the area fought alongside the citizens without getting permission from their leaders.

The defenders inflicted a crushing defeat on the hostile regime forces, captured seven soldiers, wounded one officer and one soldier, and seized quantities of weapons and several military vehicles.

However, all this loot and the captured troops were handed back to the Baghdad regime on the orders of the KDP leader.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Government 'Saboteurs' Arrested in Kurdistan

NC0101162896 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in northern Iraq have revealed that the regime of the tyrant Saddam Husayn has sent a new group of saboteurs to Iraqi Kurdistan to carry out bombings and assassinate Kurdish officials and representatives of various Iraqi opposition factions residing in that area.

The sources obtained their information from the confessions made by some of these mercenaries of the regime who were arrested. They said that they had been instructed to provoke security incidents and battles between the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and to assassinate some opposition figures living in northern Iraq and bomb their headquarters.

According to security sources in Iraqi Kurdistan, the leader of the saboteur mercenary group is named Hasan Khoshnaw. His chief aides are Lieutenant Colonel Mahir and Major Shukri. All were arrested in the 'Amir Hotel in Irbil. During the investigation it was revealed that the hotel's proprietor was one of their supporters.

Saddam Chairs Ba'th Party Command Meeting

JN0201202196 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] Comrade leader Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, secretary of the Iraq Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, has chaired the meeting of the party's Iraq Command.

The meeting was attended by Ahmad Husayn Khuddayir, chief of the Presidential office.

'Udayy's Chairmanship of Groups Expires

JN0201140596 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 17 Dec 95 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Comrade 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, acting secretary of the Central Students and Youth Bureau and secretary of the Professional Bureau of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, has met with members of the Executive Bureau of the National Union of Iraqi Students, the General Federation of Iraqi Youth, and the Iraqi Cultural Forum.

During this meeting, comrade 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur affirmed that the sectors of youth, students, and intellectuals, including artists, writers, and journalists, have enjoyed the great care and attention of leader President Saddam Husayn, in view of their important role in building the Iraqi society which the Ba'th Party seeks to present as a model for Arabdom.

The comrade member of the party Iraq Command commended the good offices of comrade 'Udayy Saddam Husayn upon the expiration of his work duties as chairman of these organizations in the service of the struggle course of the glorious 17-30 July Revolution under the leadership of struggler President Saddam Husayn.

The discussion during the meeting dealt with future prospects for the work of the National Union of Iraqi Students, the General Federation of Iraqi Youth, and the different cultural, artistic, and journalistic associations and the means of enabling them to continue their creative work and so strengthen the spirit of patience among the faithful in face of the criminal blockade until the crossing to the bank of final victory, God willing, under the leadership of struggler President Saddam Husayn.

Opposition Says General, Driver Die in Ambush

NC0301110096 Paris AFP in English 1030 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Jan 3 (AFP)—An Iraqi army general and his driver were killed in an ambush on a road near the northern town of Karkuk, the opposition said.

The Iraqi National Congress (INC) said late Tuesday [3 January] that armed rebels killed General Muhammad Hammudi al-Tayi', commander of the 22nd brigade of the army's 8th division, and driver 'Aziz Hadi.

"Other people in the convoy were captured and military material seized," it said, in a statement sent to AFP in Cyprus.

The army retaliated for Sunday's attack by shelling nearby Kurdish villages and raking them with machine-gun fire from helicopters, said the INC, which is based in northern Iraq.

Most of northern Iraq, apart from around Karkuk, is controlled by Kurdish rebels. There was no confirmation of the ambush from the Iraqi authorities.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Beilin on Syrian Talks; Savir Urges European Aid

TA0301082096 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0500 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Telephone interview with Economy and Planningn Minister Yosi Beilin by 'Oded Ben-'Ami and Mikhal Gazit; place not given — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Ben-'Ami] The Syrian newspaper TISHRIN has written about a Syrian desire for peace as soon as 1996. Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation to the Maryland talks, said that there is a Syrian willingness for comprehensive peace and has spoken of the necessity of a Peres-al-Asad summit for finalizing the agreement. I want to ask you whether our expectations are not too high?

[Beilin] I hope not. We still do not know, however, the answer to the main question. Even if President al-Asad agrees to peace with Israel — and I assume that in principle he has been ready for this since the Madrid conference in 1991 — the question is whether he agrees to a compromise between his original positions and those he believes he could achieve in the negotiations with Israel. So far we have not seen any change in Syria's basic positions regarding the most important issue for us, namely, normalization and the security arrangements.

[Ben-'Ami] During the first round of talks, has our delegation in Washington heard new words on this issue?

[Beilin] It sensed a new atmosphere, but has not heard a consolidated position that is more acceptable to us than in the past. We have heard an agreement in principle for normalization, but very little in terms of a commitment to normalization, and this is a central problem. We will have to examine the issue of security arrangements. In terms of the border line to be determined between the two countries, Syria will eventually have to be more flexible. Even if Syria agrees to have peace in 1996, if this peace is based on their conditions I find it very difficult to visualize its implementation.

[Gazit] Doesn't the fact that Warren Christopher will arrive for a shuttle mission in the region make the Maryland talks an exercise in futility? Doesn't this fact cast a shadow of pessimism over them?

[Beilin] Absolutely not. The entire predetermined structure referred to two rounds of talks between the two sides — with the participation of the Americans — to be followed by Christopher's shuttle diplomacy. This structure is being adhered to and the question is whether in the next three days it will be possible to finalize a draft for the continuation of the negotiations — at least a procedural draft that will enable the secretary to carry out his activity in a more intensive manner. If this happens, the negotiations can be a combination of shuttle diplomacy and talks between the sides — hopefully at a higher level at a later stage.

[Gazit] The delegations in Maryland held no official contacts since the katyushas landed last Friday, but there were a lot of unofficial contacts. Was there any reaction by the Syrian delegation to this incident?

[Beilin] I am not aware about any Syrian reaction. I know there were no direct contacts between us and the Syrians in the last few days, between the rounds.

[Ben-'Ami] Minister Beilin, returning to the talks: What would you consider a success at the end of the second round of talks beyond a procedural agreement?

[Beilin] It is hard to measure success over a period of two days. After four years in which hardly any progress was made, I would not like to burden these informal talks with too much weight and to encumber them with tests measuring their success. I would like to see this entire structure — that is, the two rounds and Christopher's visit — as perhaps the last attempt to examine whether there is a chance for a breakthrough. As far as I am concerned, a breakthrough mainly means a sign of Syria's willingness to change its positions, because words that refer only to an agreement in principle will not suffice this time.

[Gazit] Minister Beilin, turning from diplomacy to domestic politics: Over the last few days we have heard many voices in Labor calling for early elections. What is your opinion about this issue?

[Beilin] I find it difficult to understand what these people want. I want to see whether we can advance the peace process, and if this is the case, we have almost a year to do this, and it is a waste of time to speak about early elections.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0500 GMT on 3 January includes a report on the Wye Plantation talks adding: "The Israeli delegation has briefed the ambassadors of Italy, Spain, and Ireland on their talks with the Syrians. Israel's chief negotiator, Uri Savir, has called on the European states to help advance the process and the ambassadors expressed their readiness to do so. Savir pointed out that there is an understanding between Israel and Syria that an accord between them would be the basis of a regional peace."]

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Push for Early Elections Said Dependent on Syria

TA0201192396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Report by political correspondent Nisim Mish'al]

[FBIS Translated Text] The prevalent inclination among Labor Party ministers is that if U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who will arrive in the region next week, does not bring news from Damascus on greater Syrian flexibility, there will be no choice but to announce early elections. Ministers whom we spoke with tonight said that the gaps between the two countries remain unresolved despite the good atmosphere at the talks. The Syrian demand for withdrawal to the borders of 4 June 1967, one minister said, is impossible from the point of view of Israeli public opinion. Such a withdrawal is a sure recipe for an electoral defeat, he added. Therefore, the Syrians will have to be flexible in this respect.

The U.S. Administration is fully aware of Israel's difficulties and of the possibility of early elections and, therefore, the U.S. peace team members will make every effort to expedite the negotiations by submitting bridging proposals on a variety of issues to the parties. One of the proposals speaks of creating a new withdrawal line that would be more convenient for Israel — one that would be based on an exchange of territory, the leasing of lands, and extensive economic aid, mainly to Syria.

A senior minister said that in the course of this month, we will know whether an agreement with Syria will be attainable within five to six months or whether the negotiations will continue to dawdle for many more months. That is to say, the results of Christopher's talks will determine the date of the Israeli elections.

Officials close to the prime minister stressed tonight that Peres will support early elections only if he feels he is about to lose the parliamentary majority he needs to carry out his policies.

Peres Denies Asking U.S. for Money, Weapons

TA0201181396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1605 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres says the current stage in the contacts with Syria is one in which the terms of the dialogue are being worked out. He asserted that the aim is to create an atmosphere of dialogue in order to clear up the disagreements. So far, the delegations have not addressed the disputed issues.

As for the redeployment in Judaea and Samaria, Peres said that the conduct of the Israelis and Palestinians was surprisingly good and that the Palestinian side proved its capability and sense of responsibility. Peres made these remarks at a Labor caucus meeting. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports:

[Begin recording] [Nir] The meeting began with a toast to the success of the Labor census. Self-satisfaction was also noticeable in Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' remarks, despite his dry and businesslike tone. He said: A new reality has been created in the territories. Most residents, with the exception of Hebron, are under Palestinian self-rule. The Palestinian side has proved itself able to shoulder its responsibilities. Their reactions to the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] redeployment were positive, and their speeches have become more moderate. Our side, too, has reacted favorably, and several settlement leaders have launched a dialogue with their Palestinian neighbors.

[Peres] What I think is particularly significant is that people are beginning to understand that relations, especially in the sphere of security, cannot be conducted only through fences and that a productive dialogue is also required.

[Nir] Shim'on Peres added that the Norwegian Government has established a fund named "Nation to Nation," which aims to promote an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in social fields, such as sports and the theater, as well as encounters between teachers and educators.

The number of territories workers employed in Israel has again grown to the past record of 100,000. There are some very interesting buds of Israeli-Palestinian cooperation, which should be cultivated, Peres said.

Referring to the talks with the Syrians, the prime minister said that at this stage the sides are forging a preparatory dialogue prior to a discussion of the disputed issues.

The prime minister denied recent media reports, saying: We did not ask the United States for a cent; we did not ask for weapons. The U.S. delegation has never submitted a bridging proposal.

[Peres] I do not know who keeps making up all these tales. There were private as well as formal and informal meetings. The Syrian reports have been very positive, too. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Shin Bet Chief on PA's Handling of 'Terrorists'

TA0201162296 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Shin Bet chief cautioned today that cities in Judaea and Samaria might turn into safe havens for terrorists. Appearing before the Knesset

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, K. said that Gaza and Jericho have turned into such safe havens and into launching pads for terrorist attacks and that the same might happen with other cities handed over to the Palestinians. At the same time, the Shin Bet chief stressed that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has adopted a more stringent attitude toward the Palestinian opposition and has been arresting potential suicide bombers. Our Knesset correspondent Hadar Vismonsky reports:

[Vismonsky] The Shin Bet is undergoing a revolution in the wake of the redeployment in Judaea and Samaria. We are entering a new battlefield, K. said, and all the rules of the game are changing. Addressing the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, K. said that the morning after the elections in the territories, we will wake up to a new reality. Meanwhile, he noted, Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad have no trouble recruiting suicide bombers, and their operational ability is improving. He revealed that the Shin Bet has clear-cut evidence of connections between Hamas and Iran and between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Syria.

The Shin Bet chief reported that the PA has adopted a more stringent attitude in its dealings with opposition elements and even managed to locate and arrest 80 potential suicide terrorists in 1995. K. gave the Knesset committee data about terror attacks in 1995: There were eight suicide attacks in Israel, 49 Israelis were killed, and over 300 were wounded. The Shin Bet foiled four attacks, while shooting at Israelis in Gaza, Judaea, and Samaria decreased significantly.

In addition to his briefing to the committee, history was made today. A new chapter was recorded in the Shin Bet's openness to the media, when all of K.'s remarks were given in an orderly briefing to the surprised journalists. Incidentally, throughout the session, no mention at all was made of the words Shamgar Commission, while the prime minister's assassination was not included on the committee's agenda.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 2 January notes that K. further told the Knesset committee that "Jibril al-Rujub, head of the Preventive Security Service, and his men have been pursuing their attempts to undermine the agreements pertaining to Jerusalem. The Shin Bet has been monitoring their activities, however, and does not allow them to operate."]

IDF in Guerrilla War Training for South Lebanon

TA0101140796 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 1 Jan 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] For the first time ever, IDF [Israel Defense Forces] units have started holding counterguerrilla warfare training in preparation for routine security duty in south Lebanon.

The first unit to launch this training is the Nahal Brigade, which started this training last month in the framework of a brigade exercise.

In place of the brigade exercises that are normally carried out for only three days before the units enter Lebanon, the soldiers now undergo a training period of seven days.

During this period they carry out activity similar in nature to the kind required in south Lebanon and hold special counterterrorism training. The training is conducted mainly in the framework of small units with emphasis being put on survival in the field, night warfare, and operating various weapons. The training also includes night movement and ambushes in bushy areas and rough terrain.

The officers hold a two-week guerrilla warfare training period in an area which resembles the south Lebanon terrain, according to military sources.

The planners of the new training program were aided by, among others, civilians specializing in survival skills and teams specializing in camouflage. "This fighting method prepares soldiers and officers for the special kind of activity they are required to carry out in Lebanon," according to senior officers.

IDF sources hope the new training methods will be incorporated into the IDF's combat doctrine.

The Nahal Brigade is also the first brigade providing "guerrilla warfare" training for its officers and sergeants. Those who underwent this training completed a week of a prolonged march during which they had to accomplish many missions while carrying all their equipment on their backs. During that week they had to accomplish observation missions while filling out observation logs, survival missions, and various nocturnal missions. Military sources explained that this survival course is aimed at improving and sharpening their "guerrilla warfare" skills.

Other IDF infantry brigades are also slated to undergo this training.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

IDF Plans, Document on Redeployment Reported

TA0101131296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 1 Jan 96 p A1

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a closed meeting yesterday at the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command, which dealt with the redeployment of the IDF and the Palestinian Authority [PA] prior to the PA elections, Major General Ilan Biran, commander of the Central Command, disclosed that he had decided to move up IDF redeployment in the West Bank from 20 to 18 January.

Maj. Gen. Biran explained that the elections were scheduled to be held on the Jewish sabbath (20 January) and he preferred not to mobilize IDF troops on that day. He was therefore bringing forward the redeployment.

In order to prepare for the elections, the IDF would send a stream of many forces into the West Bank in an attempt to prevent terrorist attacks and incidents between the towns under Palestinian control and the settlements which would remain under Israeli control. The IDF will begin redeploying on Thursday morning [18 January] and complete it on Friday, a day before the elections. The PA also should prepare itself for the early redeployment.

At the closed meeting at the Central Command, it transpired that the IDF and the PA will deploy forces together and cooperate to prevent terrorist attacks and incidents during the elections. "We asked them to respect the sanctity of the Sabbath, and they did," noted a senior officer.

The Central Command is gearing itself up for the Palestinian elections on the assumption that Jewish right-wing extremists as well as the PA's Palestinian opposition may attempt to perpetrate terrorist attacks.

Biran will recommend to Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, that a general closure be imposed on the territories on election day.

At the meeting, it was reported that in spite of the elections, holy sites such as the Cave of the Patriarchs and Joseph's Tomb would remain open to worshipers. Maj. Gen. Oren Shahor, coordinator of government activities in the territories, revealed that the Palestinians' voter registry would be ready only on 4 January. Therefore, election campaigning could officially start only on 7 January. This, despite the fact that candidates are already engaged in political activities. Shahor said that the Palestinians wanted the process to run smoothly. At this point, Maj. Gen. Biran noted: "Success in the elections means a lack of IDF involvement."

At the meeting, the officers were briefed on the uniquely problematic nature of the elections in Hebron due to the daily friction between the Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the town. The officers said that the IDF had done all it could to station the polling booths at a distance from the roads used by the settlers or their houses. The commander of the Hebron brigade specified focal points of confrontation between the Palestinians and the settlers, noting that unarmed Palestinian policemen would be deployed in Hebron.

The participants in the meeting examined various scenarios for confrontational situations on election day and discussed ways to deal with them.

[Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 1 January, in a report by Alex Fishman on pages 1 and 19, adds that "a report prepared by the Central Command, preparatory to this month's deliberations by the IDF with regard to its redeployment in the West Bank, states that the transfer of Arab settlements in the Jerusalem area, western Samaria, the 'Etzyon Bloc, and Jordan Rift Valley to full Palestinian self-rule was a mistake that has a significant impact on the possibility of achieving a moderate territorial compromise within the framework of the permanent arrangement. The document asserts that during the negotiations with the Palestinians, Israel dropped the IDF's demand that such Arab settlements be given a special status different from the one eventually granted to the PA in Area B, in which the Palestinians have full civil powers, and also enjoy authority in the field of public order.

["According to the document, this Israeli concession, which was made during the 'Arafat-Peres meeting on 4 July 1995, put these areas under full Palestinian self-rule, thus establishing facts in the field prior to the permanent arrangement.

["As for the IDF's continued redeployment during the interim period, Maj. Gen. Ilan Biran assesses in the document that only one of the three planned stages will ultimately be implemented. In Biran's assessment, this stage will be merely 'cosmetic' and should, in Biran's view, be immediately followed by efforts to reach a permanent arrangement.

["In the document, Biran goes on to stipulate that the plan for additional redeployment is a mistake, as is limiting its time frame until 1997. The three-stage plan will to all intents and purposes determine the permanent arrangement, which will be formulated only in 1999. The implementation of the three stages of withdrawal prior to July 1997 creates difficulties, in my opinion, in the field of military deployment and in maintaining the daily routine of the Jewish population in the area.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

["The paper indicates that IDF officers at the implementation level believe that it would be preferable to do without the interim phases of the IDF's future redeployment, and to reach earlier understandings on the permanent arrangement.

["The document complains that government involvement in preparing the Jewish communities in the West Bank, in the fields of infrastructure, education, transportation, and so forth was too little and too late."

[The report goes on to note that "according to IDF assessments, the Palestinian population will double within 20 years. There will then be 9 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Jordan, and Israel. This, in addition to 1.5 million Palestinian refugees in Syria and Lebanon. These data, the Army believes, should serve as the working assumption for planning the demographic aspect of the tripartite arrangements between Jordan, the Palestinians, and Israel."]

Peres Orders Release of Suspected Russian Mafioso

TA0301125496 Tel Aviv VESTI in Russian 3 Jan 96 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Yosif Kobzon was detained yesterday morning at Ben-Gurion Airport upon his arrival from Moscow. As far as is known, no formal charges have been filed against him, although it was mentioned that he was detained "because of his ties to the Russian mafia."

VESTI has learned that the move was made on the instructions of Israel's Internal Security Ministry [ISM]. The ISM originally intended to deport Kobzon back to Russia on the same day, but when Prime Minister Shim'on Peres was informed about the incident, he issued appropriate instructions to the ISM, following which Kobzon was released after spending only a few hours in detention.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1105 GMT on 3 January carries a similar report on Kobzon's detention at Ben-Gurion Airport by correspondent Shim'on Vilna'i. The report states that Kobzon was released following "intervention by Russian Ambassador to Israel Aleksandr Bovin, who demanded that Kobzon be released at once, as his detention might cause an incident liable to harm Russian-Israeli relations. We have learned that senior political elements in Jerusalem intervened in the matter even before Bovin's action. These elements explicitly ordered the police and the Interior Ministry to allow Kobzon to enter Israel. As far as we know, Kobzon is now staying at a Tel Aviv hotel. He came to Israel on business."]

There has been no reply to a VESTI query to the Interior Ministry and the ISM regarding the grounds for the accusations cited yesterday against Kobzon, but the Interior Ministry media adviser assured us that the matter would definitely be explained in detail today.

The question now is: If Kobzon was not going to be admitted into Israel "on grounds of ties with the Russian mafia," why was he given an entry visa in the first place? Kobzon was refused entry to the United States, for instance, but he was informed of it the moment he applied for a visa at the U.S. Embassy. How can they issue a man an entry visa, and then send him back? And then, again, decide not to send him back? What strange games our security organs play.

Rabin Camp Absent From Peres' Favored Candidates

TA0301114496 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 3 Jan 96 p 12

[Report by Nehama Dowek]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] War was declared in Labor last night, upon the circulation of what was dubbed "the list of Shim'on Peres' recommended candidates" in the primaries. According to a very senior source in Peres' camp, the list has been circulated by his associate, Knesset Member Avraham Katz-'Oz.

According to the source, the list includes the names of Peres' favorites in the primaries scheduled to be held in another three months. The name most conspicuously missing from the list is that of Hayim Ramon, along with that of other ministers, such as Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, Avraham Shohat, David Liba'i, Ora Namir, Shim'on Shetrit, and Efrayim Sne. Most of those missing from the list clearly used to belong to Rabin's camp, while some of them crossed the lines from Peres' camp in the 1992 elections.

Peres recommends 10 names in the national list: Ehud Baraq, Moshe Shahal, 'Uzi Bar'am, Ori Or, Eli Dayan, Yosi Beilin, Hagay Merom, Ya'el Dayan, Dalya Itzik, and Masha Lubelsky — most of them loyal and old-time members of Peres' camp. Voters will be asked to tick off the names of 12 to 15 candidates in the national list (as well as the name of one candidate in their own district), and will therefore be "free" to choose two to five names in addition to those in Peres' list.

As for the districts, Peres' list suggests Shlomo Buhbut and Ronen Palit in the northern district; Hayim Kohen and Tzali Reshef in Jerusalem; Efi Hosha'aya in the Sharon-Samaria district; and Ra'anan Kohen and Yisra'el Peleg in the Dan district.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

The publication of the list is bound to cause turmoil in Labor, since it implies full support for the persons listed in it, with its authors explicitly noting that these are the prime minister's favored candidates.

Associates of the prime minister said yesterday that Peres will not officially and publicly support any candidate and will conduct himself in a dignified manner, as befits a prime minister and party chairman, but that the work in the field will be done by his men according to his instructions.

It transpired yesterday that people continued to register for Labor even after the registration closed. Some 45,000 people joined in the last 48 hours, but they will not be allowed to vote in the primaries. The number of registered Labor members now totals 350,000: 52 percent are women, and over half are below the age of 30. [passage omitted]

Poll: Peres, Labor Leading Netanyahu, Likud

TA3012131195 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 29 Dec 95

[Teleseqer Institute public opinion poll under the direction of Dori Shadmon]

[FBIS Translated Text] Question: If direct elections for the premiership were held today, who of the following would you vote for?

Answer: Shim'on Peres — 45 percent; Binyamin Netanyahu — 24; Refa'el Eytan — 9; David Levi — 7.

Question: Who would you vote for in the second and decisive round?

Answer: Shim'on Peres — 49 percent; Binyamin Netanyahu — 32.

Question: If the Knesset elections were held today, how many seats would each of the parties obtain?

Answer: Labor — 43; Meretz — 8; Arab parties — 6-7; Likud — 31; Tzomet — 6; Moledet — 2; religious parties — 14; David Levi — 2-3; The Third Way — 2-3; New Immigrants Party — 4.

Ministry Approves East Jerusalem Voters List

TA3112163695 Jerusalem Government Press Office in English 31 Dec 95

[Statement by Interior Ministry spokeswoman Tova Elinson on 31 December; place not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In keeping with its obligation from the agreement with Israel, the Palestinian Authority transferred to the Interior Ministry the data of the survey it carried out in regarding the voter registration list for eastern Jerusalem. The material reached the Interior Ministry in two batches. The first batch, which reached the ministry on 6 December 1995, included 49,164 entries for residents. The material was checked at the Population Registry at the Interior Ministry in Jerusalem. The ministry confirmed 41,613 entries, i.e., 7,551 erroneous entries were found.

The second batch, which contained an additional 41,984 entries, was received at the Interior Ministry on 25 December 1995. The ministry confirmed 37,044 entries, i.e., 4,940 erroneous entries were found.

In total, 91,148 entries were received; of these, approximately 30,000 double entries were found. A total of 49,915 entries were verified and approved.

It must be emphasized that approval of the list which was verified constitutes confirmation that those entered in it are entitled to participate in the elections for the Palestinian Authority and do not add or detract from the rights of anyone included in it.

Ministers Refuse To Sign Secrecy Statement

TA0301085096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first session of the political security cabinet has ended. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the ministers who are members of this cabinet refused to sign the secrecy statement, arguing that they had not been presented its final version.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Israeli Foreign Minister Baraq Continues Visit

Meets With King, Addresses Press

JN0201173896 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1600 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn received Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq at Raghadan Palace today.

His majesty and the guest minister held a closed meeting followed by an expanded meeting attended by His Highness Crown Prince Hasan and a number of senior officials on both sides.

During the meeting, they discussed the peace process. Baraq briefed His Majesty King Husayn on the course of Syrian-Israeli negotiations. He expressed optimism over the possibility of achieving tangible progress on this track, which will lead to the signing of peace agreements between Syria and Israel as well as Lebanon and Israel.

They also discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest. Moreover, they discussed what was agreed on between Jordan and Israel as part of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, including five agreements on a number of fields which will be signed by the Jordanian and Israeli sides this month.

The meeting was also attended by His Excellency Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, Royal Hashemite Court Chief Marwan al-Qasim, Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, and Jordanian Ambassador in Tel Aviv Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir. It was attended on the Israeli side by the Israeli ambassador in Amman and the delegation accompanying Baraq.

In the joint press statements with Baraq after the talks, his majesty said: I am pleased on this occasion to welcome a dear friend, who is one of the contributors to the making of peace between Israel and Jordan, namely, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq.

His majesty added: We have had an opportunity to discuss many issues, including what we have thus far achieved. In the coming days, we will finalize an agreement on every issue raised during this meeting.

His majesty asserted that we are doing our best to work together in order to attain a better future for this region through a comprehensive peace. His majesty said: You know that peace between Jordan and Israel is considered an example to be followed by others. We are aware of our responsibilities toward the coming generations with regard to affording them an opportunity that was not given to many of us.

Further on News Conference

JN0201195696 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 2 Jan 96

[News conference by King Husayn and Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq with unidentified correspondents following their meeting at Raghadan Palace in Amman on 2 January — recorded, in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Husayn] I would like to say how pleased we all are to have had this opportunity to welcome a very dear friend and one of the contributors toward the establishment of peace between Israel and Jordan, Foreign Minister Baraq.

We have had a chance to talk about a variety of subjects regarding where we are right now, what we have achieved so far, and I will leave it to you [referring to Baraq] to announce that within the next few days we would have completed agreement on every subjected raised till this time.

We are doing everything we can to work together for a better future for this region. We believe in a comprehensive peace. We hope that the peace between Jordan and Israel will be an example and an inspiration to others. And we know where our duty lies in terms of giving future generations the opportunity and the chance that maybe many of us over so (?very) long period of time didn't enjoy.

And we talked about other issues regarding the area, and I'm very, very happy indeed that these talks have been very, very frank, as always, and very open in the spirit of friendship and between friends. Thank you very, very much. Go ahead, sir.

[Baraq] I'm delighted to have the opportunity to have a discussion with his majesty the king, a devoted fighter for the cause of peace between our two peoples.

We exchanged views about the bilateral relationship and the future developments and the overall situation in the Middle East. I'm delighted to announce that we have agreed that before Ramadan [which begins around 21 January] we'll go to sign the agreements on transportation, on the marine border, on al-'Aqabah-Elat, on communication.

And we are going to step forward from the phase of signing agreements into the phase of implementing a kind of cooperation on all levels between our economies, between our business communities, between our academic communities, and between our two peoples as individuals. And we are really looking forward to the development, and we perceive the relationship with Jordan to be a symbol and a model of what can be achieved between two cooperative peoples.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

[Correspondent] What made you decide to come on an official visit to Israel?

[Husayn] The visit next week? Well, obviously those are occasions that we wish to partake in honoring those who worked for the cause of peace on both sides. That was planned some while ago, but unfortunately a very tragic happening that has affected all of us in this region [reference to Rabin assassination] postponed or made it impossible for this to have happened under the planned circumstances, so I hope that we will be at Kinneret.

And, furthermore, there is another visit that I hope I will be able to make simultaneously with the visit to Kinneret. And I hope that we will have the opportunity to see a lot that has been done and also to honor the late Prime Minister Rabin on that occasion. And on top of all that to visit two Jordanian soldiers who are being treated in Israel, and who have made some wonderful progress in the recent past.

[Correspondent] Did you discuss also the Syrian-Israeli track, and does the Jordanian-Israeli peace model can be an example for other tracks? [as heard]

[Husayn] I hope it will be an example that would be worth looking at by all, and I hope it will be an example for what should be the relations between all in the region in the future. And I really hope and pray that the efforts made by all concerned will produce peace in this region and a comprehensive peace that we have all sought for so long.

[Correspondent] Your Majesty, what does the Israeli Government should do, in your mind, to make the peace more encompassing grassroots level in Jordanian society because we had a meeting with some Jordanian journalists. [as heard] We got the impression that the grassroots of the people are not that confident with the peace yet. Do you suggest some measures Israel should take?

[Husayn] I think this is only natural that people take a bit of time until they see the results. But, I believe that there is an overwhelming degree of support in Jordan and I suggest that the grassroots in this country, throughout the country of Jordan, are very supportive of peace and very hopeful of the future.

[Correspondent] [Words indistinct] the Syrian-Israeli track, do you feel it is a real substance or it's only atmospheric [word indistinct]?

[Baraq] It is only the beginning of a long journey that, we hope, will lead to peace. It's a little bit too early to judge it by the first steps, may say, create a kind of optimism even if a cautious one.

[Correspondent] Is the United States going to be involved in security arrangements in the Golan Heights?

[Baraq] The United States is now involved in providing the accommodation and their diplomatic support for the success of these, may say, preliminary steps of negotiations. It's too early to judge or to predict any kind of involvement of the Americans in the future.

[Correspondent] Did you discuss the Iraqi topic with his majesty, and do you see eye-to-eye in terms of the future of the Saddam Husayn regime in Iraq?

[Baraq] I don't think that we should comment to the public about things that have to do with the third party. We are both living in this area and we exchange views on what is happening around us in the [words indistinct].

[Correspondent, in Arabic] [Question indistinct]

[Husayn, in Arabic] Now that the peacemaking stage is over, the coming stage will be peacebuilding for both countries and both people. We hope we will march with all hope and optimism to achieve a good future for both countries. We have completed the laying down of the bases and we are now proceeding toward a promising future, God willing.

[Correspondent, in Arabic] [Words indistinct] do you expect a larger role for Jordan in the coming stage with regard to the Palestinian issue?

[Husayn, in Arabic] We hope things will proceed in their right direction. We are happy for what has been achieved so far. We are very much satisfied with this. We share our Palestinian brothers their joy over what they have accomplished and we wish them success. We will support the march with all our potential to reach their objectives at the right time.

[Correspondent] Your Majesty, are you going to hold the conference of the Iraqi opposition here in Amman?

[Husayn] I'd rather not say very much about this, and I think that this is something that concerns us here, but we are definitely supportive of the idea that Iraqis should together and should try to resolve their differences and problems, and should have a vision of the future that is reassuring to the people of Iraq.

Meets With al-Kabariti, Comments

JN0201130396 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Italicized passages recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Crown Prince Hasan received Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq at the Royal Hashemite Court this morning. The meeting

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

was attended by Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti.

Following the meeting, the Israeli minister met with al-Kabariti at the Foreign Ministry. Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir also received Baraq and his delegation at the Prime Ministry. Talks dealt with bilateral relations and the peace process in the region.

Following the meeting, al-Kabariti and Baraq spoke to journalists. Al-Kabariti said: *The meeting was positive and constructive. Of course, we discussed bilateral relations and ways of activating the agreements signed between Israel and Jordan and fixing a date, God willing, for signing the rest of the agreements. I think that by the end of this month we will sign all the agreements related to the treaty. These agreements are the transportation, communications, demarcation of maritime borders between Israel and Jordan, the cultural and scientific agreement, and the agreement on cooperation between al-'Aqabah and Elat.*

Baraq said he is very pleased with the present cooperation between Jordan and Israel resulting from the peace treaty. He said that in fact he expects to find a way for signing soon some agreements in the fields of transportation, communications, cooperation between al-'Aqabah and Elat, and bilateral relations in the fields of culture and sciences. He added that currently we are moving from the stage of concluding agreements to the stage of making real peace between the economies and peoples of the region.

Answering a question on the Jordanian role in the Palestinian-Israeli talks, al-Kabariti said: *The Jordanian role in the Israeli-Palestinian talks is a supportive one which supports the Palestinian efforts. We do not go beyond this supportive role in the talks.*

On the results of the Jordanian-Israeli agreements on the other peace tracks, al-Kabariti said: *I think that the relations and the agreements from the Israeli-Jordanian treaty constitute a model that encourages all parties and negotiators on all tracks to reach similar agreements. These agreements are balanced and fair ones. We are very satisfied with the positive developments that took place on the Syrian track and which were mainly based on the nine or 10 points that have been published by the press. We think the Syrian side has started to speak about basic issues and to avoid technical, procedural, and marginal issues. This, in itself, is a positive development that we hope will continue. Following the visit to the region by the U.S. secretary of state on 10 and 11 January, we think that there will be more development and positiveness on the Syrian-Israeli track.*

Baraq arrived in Amman this morning on a short visit to Jordan during which he will hold talks with ranking officials dealing with developments in the region, the peace process, and bilateral, regional, and international issues of joint interest.

He was received on arrival by al-Kabariti, the Jordanian ambassador in Tel Aviv, and the Israeli ambassador in Amman.

King Confirms Iraqi Opposition Conference Plans

TA0201165096 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1500 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] King Husayn and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq agreed today to finish signing all the agreements appended to the Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty by 18 January. Israel consented in principle to release 16 of the 40 Jordanian prisoners, most of them infiltrators, incarcerated in Israel. At the end of his meeting with Baraq, Husayn said he hopes to have the opportunity to honor Rabin's memory in the course of his visit to Israel. Our political correspondent Udi Segal reports:

[Begin Segal recording] The foreign minister's visit once again proves that Jordan is the first partner to share Shim'on Peres' ideas about regional peace. The Jordanian prime minister told Baraq today: The Iranian threat is also directed at us. Referring to the Syrian issue, he said: The Syrians are a true partner to peace with you. Baraq was a bit more cautious on the issue and said: The extent of Damascus' seriousness has yet to be checked. [passage omitted]

King Husayn confirmed the report carried yesterday by IDF Radio whereby he is contemplating a conference of representatives of the Iraqi opposition in a bid to find a replacement to Saddam Husayn's regime, but he was not prepared to furnish any details. Foreign Minister al-Kabariti stressed that no final decision has been made on the issue yet. [end recording]

Prime Minister on Iraq, Unions, Other Issues

JN0301124696 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 3 Jan 96 p 13

["Text" of interview with Prime Minister al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir by Riyadh Mansur, correspondent of the Qatari newspaper AL-RAYAH, in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Mansur] Talk about Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations has not stopped. Where have these relations reached and what do you say to the Kuwaiti Government and people?

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

[Bin-Shakir] Since Iraq's takeover of Kuwait, the Jordanian Government has not made any negative gestures toward the Kuwaiti Government or people. On the contrary, Kuwait closed our embassy and expelled our nationals from its territory. Nevertheless, our position toward both the Kuwaiti Government and people did not change. Now, they say that the Kuwaiti people are not ready to accept restoration of relations with Jordan. This is up to them. When they see that the time is appropriate to restore relations with us, we will have no objection.

[Mansur] Relations between Amman and Baghdad are tense. What is the real picture of the official Jordanian-Iraqi relations?

[Bin-Shakir] Our main concern in Jordan is the Iraqi people's suffering to which no Arab people have been subjected thus far. Iraq is the ancient country of oil and history. We all have to seek an end to this suffering of the Iraqi people. There is no doubt that relations between Amman and Baghdad are not as they used to be. We are worried about the future of the Iraqi people. The Iraqi Government should find a way out of the crisis into which it has dragged itself.

[Mansur] In your opinion, what is required of the Iraqi Government to get out of this dilemma?

[Bin-Shakir] The Iraqi Government should abide by UN resolutions and cooperate in all international forums to end the suffering of the Iraqi people.

[Mansur] What does Jordan think about the question of removing weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons in particular, especially since Israel still insists on rejecting removal of its nuclear weapons?

[Bin-Shakir] We are the only Arab state that has raised the issue of nuclear weapons. We believe there should be no nuclear weapons in this part of the world. We demand the removal of all types of nuclear weapons.

[Mansur] How true are the Israeli reports that a Jordanian- Israeli agreement was reached on linking the two countries' air forces with a unified warning system?

[Bin-Shakir] This is absolutely untrue.

[Mansur] Your Excellency the Prime Minister, information was recently leaked to the effect that some Jordanian areas were subjected to Israeli nuclear radiation. What measures has Jordan taken to monitor the radiation and the Israeli nuclear facilities. Where have your talks with Israel in this regard reached?

[Bin-Shakir] There have been no talks in the proper sense of the word. We have certain stations that survey radiation in specific areas abutting the Jordan Valley and other areas. No radiation detrimental to the environment and human beings has leaked to us. We were only once subjected to such radiation. It was in the northern area. The radiation was within the acceptable average. Nevertheless, we brought this issue to the attention of the Israeli side.

[Mansur] What about the developments of the government's standoff with the professional unions?

[Bin-Shakir] There is a law that should be adhered to. We have no problem if the professional unions abide by the law. If the professional unions become politicized and forget about the profession for which they were created then they violate the law. They should upgrade the level of the profession to improve the conditions of people. The profession is one thing and involvement in politics is another different thing.

We as a Jordanian people have our own political stands. We should express these opinion as individuals. We support our brothers in the unions if they express their opinion. However, the professional unions should not be employed to impose political opinions on their members.

[Mansur] There are reports on your excellency's intention to reshuffle the cabinet. What are the recent developments in this respect?

[Bin-Shakir] I heard many rumors on this issue. However, no decision has been made in this regard.

[Mansur] Do you have any intention to engage the Islamic Action Front [IAF] in your cabinet? Where have contacts in this area reached?

[Bin-Shakir] The IAF is a licensed Jordanian party and has a presence in the House of Representatives. We must consult with them. We are consulting with them in a practical way. However, nothing has jelled regarding a new government or a cabinet reshuffle.

[Mansur] Did al-'Aqabah summit between His Majesty King Husayn and President Husni Mubarak restore Amman-Cairo relations to their previous status?

[Bin-Shakir] I think there is cooperation in many areas between us and our brothers in Egypt. The latest meeting in al-'Aqabah was clear evidence that there are many issues that we can discuss together. I will not delve into details now. I would say that there are political viewpoints regarding the Middle East and the economic situation. There has to be coordination to accelerate the process. I believe joint action with our brothers in Egypt will be useful.

[Mansur] In Jordan, there is a difference on the silent majority. You, as government, say that this majority

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

supports you while the opposition claims the same thing. Who does this majority side with?

[Bin-Shakir] The silent majority sides with the homeland and the leadership. Evidence for this is that the House of Representatives, which represents the people, always supports this government.

[Mansur] The Jordanian economy is slackening. How can this be stopped?

[Bin-Shakir] I believe the economic situation in Jordan is not an easy one. We have long stages ahead of us. We must work to boost the economy. However, this will take time. Our people were disproportionally optimistic about the economic conference [Amman Middle East and North Africa economic summit], which was a success. I believe that this conference opened many doors for Jordan. The people expected that only days after the conclusion of the summit, the economic situation would improve. The improvement of the economic situation will take some time.

[Mansur] The battle of normalization with Israel between the government on the one hand and the professional unions on the other has taken many dimensions. How does the government view this issue?

[Bin-Shakir] I believe the crisis was aroused by only a few individuals. His majesty the king spoke personally spoke about this issue. We do not prevent any Jordanian citizen from meeting an Israeli citizen, whether for friendship or business. Moreover, we do not impose the exercise of normalization on Jordanian citizens, because in a democratic Jordan the citizen alone determines his relations. Nobody pressures those who do not want to establish relations with Israel.

[Mansur] How does Jordan look at the differences among the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states?

[Bin-Shakir] There are undoubtedly regrettable differences. However, I would not call them serious. I think the GCC members are the closest to each other. Therefore, there will be no crisis. We are convinced that the brothers in the Gulf have the desire to overcome their differences.

[Mansur] My last question, Your Excellency, has to do with Jordan's view of the Qatari role.

[Bin-Shakir] His Highness Amir Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani has succeeded in assuming a high-profile Qatari role in the Gulf area and the overall Arab region.

Al-Kabariti on Relations With Iraq, Kuwait, Egypt

JN0101131496 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 3 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that there is a trade route that supplies Iraq with banned goods.

Al-Kabariti said monitoring teams discovered weapons, similar to those discovered at Amman Airport, dumped in the Tigris River.

In a statement to AL-HADATH, al-Kabariti denied that Jordan has intentions to close the border with Iraq or to subject economic and popular relations to political positions.

Answering a question on the government decision to liquidate Iraqi companies operating in Amman, he said Jordan is concerned with applying its laws and rules on all quarters that want to work and stay in Jordan, which is something applicable to all non-Jordanian companies and non-Jordanian individuals.

On relations with Kuwait, he said things are developing, adding that Jordan did all that is required of it to normalize relations with Kuwait. He hoped that similar Kuwaiti steps will be made. He said he understands the feelings of the Kuwaiti people and is aware of the effects of the Gulf crisis.

The minister said: "No one has asked us to openly apologize, because an apology is asked from the quarter that committed a mistake, and the mistake and the sin were committed by Iraq when it invaded Kuwait."

Al-Kabariti was surprised about reports that President Husni Mubarak conveyed warnings to King Husayn concerning the Iraqi file and normalization with Israel.

The foreign minister said the Egyptian-Jordanian summit showed accord between Amman and Cairo on the issues that were discussed at that meeting.

Husayn Kamil Congratulates King on New Year

JN0201170296 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1510 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 2 Jan (PETRA)—His Majesty King Husayn has received a cable of congratulations on the new year from Staff General Husayn Kamil Hasan. The following is the text of the cable:

Your Majesty King Husayn Bin-Talal: May God grant you glory. It pleases me to congratulate you on the new year, beseeching God to safeguard and watch over you.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Your Majesty: While living in our dear Jordan, we feel that your care for us has eased our concerns while we are living away from our homeland and people. We are grateful and appreciate all that you have given us. This is not strange, for you and the Hashemite family are known for your generosity and care.

Your Majesty: We hope that the new year will bring you, Jordan, and the Jordanian people progress and prosperity.

Your Majesty: We seize this opportunity to reiterate our appreciation for your care and that of Jordan, our second homeland.

May God protect you and grant you success and continued good health and happiness.

King Expects No Change in Saudi Policy, Relations

JN0301095196 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 3 Jan 96 pp 1, 7

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Amman—His Majesty King Husayn said Tuesday [2 January] that he did not expect any changes in Saudi policy as a result of Crown Prince 'Abdallah's taking over the running of the country at the request of King Fahd.

Wishing King Fahd a speedy and complete recovery, the King hailed as "a dear brother" Prince 'Abdallah to whom ailing King Fahd handed over the running of Saudi Arabia Monday.

"There are no differences between our brothers... and I am full of confidence" about the future of Jordanian-Saudi relations, King Husayn said.

Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti also said that the change in Saudi Arabia will only help improve inter-Arab relations as well as Jordanian-Saudi ties.

"Prince 'Abdallah has always been an advocate of improved ties" between Jordan and Saudi Arabia, said Mr. al-Kabariti, who added that a visit by his Saudi counterpart Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal to Jordan will take place soon.

King Fahd is recovering from an apparent stroke which sent him to hospital for a week last month. A scheduled visit by the King to Saudi Arabia was postponed due to the illness of King Fahd. [passage omitted]

New Foreign Investment Law Outlined

JN0101151696 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 1 Jan 96 p 8

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Khattab Salman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The new investment law adopted recently by the government would regulate foreign investments in Jordan, allowing for foreign ownership up to 100 per cent in projects in the Kingdom, according to Investment Promotion Corporation Director-General Talib al-Rifa'i.

The new by-law would open foreign investment for up to 100 per cent in most sectors with no need for prior permits or committee reviews," Dr. al-Rifa'i said.

"However," Dr. al-Rifa'i noted, "there are a few areas where foreign investments are not allowed to exceed 50 per cent of the ownership. These sectors include schools, universities, radio and television stations, contracting transportation and retail."

Jordan is currently aiming at attracting foreign investment to the country with the introduction of investment promotion packages facilitating capital movement, and equal treatment of foreign investors as local ones.

Dr. al-Rifa'i added that investment in the areas mentioned, which are open for foreign 50 percent ownership, would not need prior permits as well. "All other sectors of industry, tourism agriculture or services will be open 100 per cent for foreign ownership," he explained.

"Another area which will enjoy a maximum of 50 per cent foreign ownership is the stocks at the Amman Financial Market," Dr. al- Rifa'i pointed out. "Any foreign investor can own up to 50 percent of the shares of any existing company without prior permit, and companies that are established with higher foreign ownership will be exempted from the 50 percent ceiling."

Foreign investors currently own 32 percent of the capitalised stock at the AFM which totals $4.4 billion. Most of these are Arab ownerships.

According to official figures, investments at the AFM in 1995 reached $595.7 million, while investments in new projects in Jordan this year totalled $394.3 million through 118 projects.

Dr. al-Rifa'i said that the objectives of the new investment by- law in areas of $50 per cent foreign ownership are to maintain social, cultural and educational policies, and protect small existing local businesses.

"As for the implications of the by-law concerning non-Jordanian investments, we expect them to increase the inflow of foreign capital to the Kingdom and create healthy competition for the local investors to improve efficiency and productivity through opening the sectors for 100 percent ownership and foreign management," Dr. al- Rifa'i explained.

He said that the minimum cash requirements for investment in the Amman stock exchange will result in attracting small and big investors to the Kingdom.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

"The implications of the by-law concerning investment areas should have a major role in directing investments to the less developed areas of the Kingdom which will result in creating job opportunities, developing the infrastructure of these areas, and providing services," Dr. al-Rifa'i said.

Government statistics put the unemployment rate in Jordan between 15-18 per cent. Dr. al-Rifa'i had said that the new projects that enjoyed exemptions provided by the investment promotion law this year provided over seven thousand job opportunities.

"Finally," he said, "the new by-law would reflect positively on the macroeconomic policies of the Kingdom by providing more job opportunities, increasing foreign currency reserves, increasing exports and effectively reducing government deficit, and achieving higher rates of growth."

Interrogation Methods Questioned in Sabotage Case

JN0101143796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 1 Jan 96 p 3

["Special to the JORDAN TIMES" by Rana al-Husayni]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—Military prosecutors Sunday [31 December] summed up their case against six suspects accused of sabotage, opening the way for the defence to begin its argument.

The State Security Court headed by Colonel Hafiz Amin, was presented with a file implicating the defendants of plotting subversion in Jordan and of belonging to an illegal organisation.

State prosecutor General Captain Samih al-Majali told the court that the file contains the defendants' own testimonies, the seized explosives and weapons and a copy of the 1994 law endorsing the peace treaty with Israel.

Attorney Kamal Nasir, who was speaking on behalf of the other three attorneys representing the six defendants Sunday contested the prosecution's file questioning the legality of some of the procedures that were taken during the interrogation.

He charged that the defendants were interrogated under duress and that their confessions were taken without the signature of the stenographer, which he stated "is an obligation" according to the law.

Dr. Nasir also said the evidence (the explosives) which was confiscated by authorities was not handled properly.

The court however, rejected the defence request and decided to accept the prosecution's file.

The group, which started gathering members in 1990, is charged with planning to carry out attacks against foreigners in Jordan using explosives and automatic weapons.

But the group was apprehended before they actually carried out any attack.

The six defendants, who pleaded not guilty in October, are also charged with illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials, automatic weapons and guns for illegal use, and belonging to an illegal organisation.

Prosecutor witnesses included a police officer and an explosives expert.

During the court session, the tribunal heard the testimony of Captain Ahmad Faris Kurdi of the Irbid Police department, who was called on for the second time to testify after attorneys objected over one of the pieces of evidence, a red bag, which was not included with the evidence presented at court.

Capt. Kurdi told the court it was the same bag he seized along with other primitive explosives found in a cave close to the home of the fourth defendant, Khalid Muhammad Mustafa Kilani in the town of Hikma in Irbid. He added that the bag, along with the explosives, was buried 50 centimetres underground in the cave.

The defence is trying to prove that the explosives allegedly found with their clients were made available by a person from a neighbouring country.

According to the defence, their clients gathered the materials to protect themselves during the Gulf War in 1991, "in case war began in Jordan," and that when the war was over, their clients buried the explosives toget rid of them.

Dr. Nasir asked the court to postpone the session to allow time for the defence to present their witnesses. Dr. Nasir added that the six defendants "might testify in their own case."

Judge Amin set Jan. 4, to start hearing the defence witnesses.

Minister Denies Curbs on Public Freedoms, Democracy

JN3012110095 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 30 Dec 95 p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman [J.T.]—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education 'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-Rawabidah has denied rumours that Jordan was lowering the ceiling of public freedoms and that the government of Jordan was exercising pressure on opposition groups in the country.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

In an interview with the Qatari AL-RAYAH daily, the minister said opposition parties in Jordan have failed to win over the support of the man in the street or to closely involve people in the activities of political parties.

These parties, he charged, have resorted in some cases to undemocratic methods to assert their views. He further said the enforcement of the law does not mean a retreat from the path of democracy.

Mr. al-Rawabidah said the government was continuing to act democratically and through the application of the law. But, he said, others are applying undemocratic means to voice their opinions and that these, in particular, need to be stopped.

Many of those who keep bragging about public freedoms believe they are above the law and should not be asked to account for their actions, and this contradicts democratic principles, the minister said.

Referring to the press and publications law, Mr. al-Rawabidah said the government has no intention of amending that law but would contemplate the idea of amending it should violations and excesses in the media continue.

Mr. al-Rawabidah also referred to the contacts that have been going on between Amman and Damascus for the release of tens of Jordanian political prisoners held in Syrian jails.

He said contacts have failed so far to bring about results, but that efforts will continue.

He urged Jordanian political parties to assist the government in its endeavours on that track.

As to the fate of jailed Jordanians accused of selling property to Israel, the minister said this was a legal, not political issue.

Should Jordanian courts decide that their imprisonment is no longer viable following the peace treaty with Israel, then the government will set them free, Mr. al-Rawabidah asserted.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Al-Hariri on Peace Stance, Unity With Syria

NC0201181796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said that in 1996, the situation in Lebanon and the region will be be very delicate but not serious. He said that the situation requires following up and vigilance. He reasserted that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks will go in tandem. He emphasized that the Syrians will not cede one inch of their land nor will the Lebanese relinquish their land, sovereignty, or independence. [passage omitted]

Speaker: Current Tensions 'Result of Occupation'

NC0201174496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri has rejected an Israeli proposal to calm down the situation in south Lebanon before Israeli withdrawal. He stressed that cooling down the situation before Israeli withdrawal means an agreement before liberating the land. Birri also rejected another proposal by Marrack Goulding, former envoy of the UN Secretary General, to stop the resistance operations for six months. He stressed that the resistance in the south is not the cause of the current situation there but a result of the occupation. Birri said: Let Israel withdraw from the occupied Lebanese territory. We know how to ensure security in the south. He said Israeli occupation must be terminate,d and then the Israelis will have nothing to do with our security.

Speaking to reporters at the Chamber of Deputies building, and in response to a question on a statement attributed to Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on Syrian guarantees of security in the south, Birri said that such statements are intended to stir up a dispute between Lebanon and Syria. He added, regrettably, we see certain people in Lebanon who are enthusiastic about such statements although they should be enthusiastic about the contrary. He stressed that these statements are part of attempts to separate the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, adding that these attempts have not and will not succeed.

Dallul Stresses Resistance Against 'Malicious' Enemy

NC3112210095 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] National Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has said that today Lebanon is facing the major challenge of obtaining Israeli withdrawal from occupied southern Lebanon and Western al-Biqa'. We are facing a vicious enemy that has not yet decided to make a just peace, he said.

Speaking in 'Ali al-Nahri, Dallul said Israel is trying to impose capitulation on the Arabs, as was the case on the Jordanian and Palestinian tracks. He stressed that Lebanon and Syria are for peace based on the exchange of land for peace. Without this, he said, we cannot accept any peace under any circumstances.

Dallul added: Israel's language is still characterized by ambiguity and tampering. As for us, we still adhere to the same principle. We are not in a hurry, and we have to strengthen our unity to confront our enemy. If the enemy upsets our ranks, it can achieve its malicious objectives against our homeland. Peace is not coming as soon as they imagine because our enemy has unlimited ambitions in Lebanon. The resistance expresses our pride and might. It offers martyrs for the sake of the homeland. It is our fate to support the resistance, because by doing this, we preserve the sacrifices of the homeland.

5 Soldiers Released From al-Khiyam Prison

NC0301123396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation troops today released five detainees from al-Khiyam prison. From the occupied border zone, they released Hasan Abu-Taha from al-Tayyibah, 'Imad Zaytun from Kafr Shuba, Khadijah 'Awad from Hula, and Hasan al-Amin from al-Khiyam. Muhammad Husayn Ramadan, who is from Bayt Yahun, was taken outside the occupied border strip in a Red Cross car after his release.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Upcoming Christopher Tour, Ross Remarks Reported

JN0301062696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Washington — Dennis Ross, U.S. special Middle East coordinator, said that efforts will be made during the new round of Syrian-Israeli talks to explore the best ways to advance these talks.

Ross made this statement after talks with Uri Savir, head of the Israeli delegation to the Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

For his part, U.S. State Department Spokesman Glyn Davies announced yesterday that the United States was heartened by the results achieved thus far in the Syrian-Israeli peace talks.

In a statement to reporters, Davies asserted that U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will begin a new Middle East tour next week to promote the talks.

Union Head Opposed to Normalization With Israel

JN0201112396 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 1 Jan 96 p 10

[Interview with Dr. Sabir Falhut, president of the journalists union, by Ahmad Mazhar Sa'du in Damascus; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Sa'du] In the aftermath of the Zionist massacres committed against Egyptian POW's during the 1967 war, it was reported that the Syrian Writers Union and the Syrian Journalists Union were making a coordinated effort to expose these massacres. Can you tell us about this?

[Falhut] Had it not been experiencing a great stupor, a terrible fragmentation, and humiliation, the Arab nation would have turned the massacre of the Egyptian POW's into a hot and inescapable issue at international forums and in the world media as well.

The collusive silence on this horrendous and heinous massacre has been aggravated by the role being played by Arab regimes to facilitate Israel's endeavors in the region and to entice it into further crimes, excesses, and human rights violations.

In tandem with all other popular, professional, and political organizations and associations in Syria, the Journalists Union urges a mobilization of the masses. It also urges that these masses be enlightened about the dangers posed by Israeli conduct in the past, present, and in the future. Israel's disregard for all international norms and conventions, to which it has not subscribed in the first place, must be brought to light. As journalists, we appeal to all associations and organizations throughout the Arab homeland and elsewhere in the world at large to make an additional effort to expose Zionism and the Zionists of Israel. We must depict the burial alive of Egyptian POW's as the paragon of Zionist savagery. [passage omitted]

[Sa'du] If one day you are asked to receive a delegation of Zionist journalists, what will your response be?

[Falhut] I do not think that it is fair or sensible for you to expect a quick answer to this hypothetical question, however, I would like to say that I would not shake hands with a Zionist, be he a journalist, botanist, or a physician. I do not believe these people, who abandoned the homelands that raised them, educated them, and brought them up and who came to invade our territory and displace our people, could shake hands with others without causing them a deficiency in humaneness. This judgment is the outcome of our experience with Zionists. I do not think that one can change or adulterate his convictions in this regard in one's lifetime.

[Sa'du] Your well-known frankness prompts me to ask you in all candor the following question: Will the Syrian Journalists Union walk in the footsteps of the Syrian Writers Union, which has expelled all members who welcomed or advocated normalization of ties with Israel, such as Adonis [Syrian poet 'Ali Ahmad Sa'id] and Hani al-Rahib [another Syrian writer]?

[Falhut] The bylaws and internal regulations of the Journalists Union do not condone reconciliation, handshakes, or normalization. Hence, any journalist who violates the union's bylaws will have to leave the union. His membership in the union will be revoked. In this case, the union that expels a violator will not be forging a heroic feat. The expulsion will merely be in compliance with a contractual obligation enshrined in the union's bylaws, one that was voluntarily accepted by union members. A violation of these bylaws is tantamount to a rejection of the terms they accepted when they joined the union. [passage omitted]

Radio: Evaluation of Israeli Stand in Talks 'Premature'

JN2912141695 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1238 GMT 29 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: The foreign ministers of the Arabian Gulf states and Egypt — who held a meeting in Damascus yesterday within the framework of the Damascus Declaration — voiced their support for Syria and for its just demand for Israel's withdrawal beyond 4 June 1967 lines and from southern Lebanon. They emphasized their support for the peace process

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

in the region and for the objective of a comprehensive peace.

This support came at a time when Syria is engaged in exploratory talks with Israel — with the participation of the United States — in order to examine how serious the Israeli officials are about the achievement of a just and well-founded peace based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, the core of the U.S. initiative, and the foundations of the Madrid Conference.

It is premature to work out an evaluation of the Israeli position, however, the Arab position has been all the more clear. Peace in the region is contingent on Israel's full withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon. Accordingly, it is in the interest of Israel to respond to the requirements of a just peace. Only a just peace can provide security and tranquility.

The Israeli officials themselves admitted in many statements that Syria is serious about making peace and that the current talks are marked with seriousness. All influential parties in the international community have acknowledged that Syria is genuinely looking forward to peace and is working seriously to attain it. Hence, Israel is shouldering a great responsibility toward rendering the talks a success, which are under way near the U.S. capital. Syria is demanding only its rights which were consecrated by all international charters and laws and were enshrined in Security Council resolutions and the assurances that were incorporated in the U.S. initiative.

Israel may not claim any right in the Golan, for the Golan is a Syrian land since time immemorial and is an integral part of the homeland. The Golan's displaced persons are awaiting the establishment of peace so that they will return to their homeland and build what was destroyed by the Israelis throughout 28 years of occupation.

Syria has agreed to institute mutual security arrangements with Israel along the 4 June 1967 lines, provided they do not violate sovereignty or maintain any trace of occupation. These arrangements will be a buttress for peace, stability, and calm. A few hundred settlers — who are instigated by extremists to stage demonstrations — cannot alter the identity of the Syrian Golan or eclipse the suffering of hundreds of thousands of displaced Syrians, who had to evacuate their villages after they were destroyed by the Israeli occupation.

The return of the Golan is a basic condition for peace. No single grain of its soil, nor a single right of any of its citizens will be ceded. The forthcoming days and weeks will reveal whether Israel is serious about the accomplishment of a just and comprehensive peace that would meet the ambitions of the countries and peoples of the region for security, stability, and safeguarding of the rights of all.

Press Commends States' Support for Peace Stand

JN3012092895 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 30 Dec 95

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] The newspaper AL-THAWRAH comments on the 12th session of talks recently held in Damascus by the Damascus Declaration [DD] states' foreign ministers, saying: Syria has always attracted Arab and foreign officials, and prompted them to visit and meet on its territory due to its position, which is supportive of the peace process, and also due to its exceptional historical endeavors to protect the Arab nation's rights and dignity. His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad has repeatedly epitomized this position by his emphasis on the need to promote the Arab nation's interests, which was noted in the statement issued by the DD states' foreign ministers. The ministers underlined their countries' eagerness to render the peace process a success, and maintained that this process must be grounded in international legitimacy, the relevant Security Council resolutions, the land-for-peace formula, and the Palestinian people's restoration of their national and political rights. They also emphasized their full support for Syria's position and just demands. Additionally, they appreciated its serious efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The paper adds: The importance of the meetings held by the DD states' foreign ministers and of the the statement they issued is derived from the fact that these developments came in the aftermath of an important visit to Cairo by His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad, during which he made statements that drew the attention of Arab and international quarters. President Hafiz al-Asad underlined the constants of the peace process and unequivocally announced that territory is the substantive mainstay of peace and that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks are inseparable. He also underscored the comprehensiveness of peace as well as complete withdrawal from the occupied Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders, and also from southern Lebanon in implementation of Resolution 425, because comprehensive peace would create security and stability in the region.

Under the headline "Full Arab Support for Syria's Just Demands," the newspaper TISHRIN addresses the same issue, saying: In the final statement issued at the conclusion of their 12th session of talks in Damascus, the DD states' foreign ministers commended

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Syria's constructive and positive stand toward the peace process, reiterated their full support for Syria's just demands, and appreciated its firm stand and serious efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace in the region, which must be grounded in complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders and from southern Lebanon.

TISHRIN adds: Now that Syria is working to ensure a positive outcome of the Washington talks that would contribute to the achievement of genuine, just, and comprehensive peace, this Arab support unequivocally shows the honesty of Syria's approach and policies, which are based on the relevant international legitimacy resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

The paper goes on to say: Syria is showing great eagerness to render the peace process a success and advance the talks on the Syrian track. It also seeks to foster pan-Arab security, protect Arab rights, and safeguard the Arabs' existence and future. Hence, Syria adheres to the peace option as a strategic approach and firm policy in its strategy. At the same time, it adheres to a unified Arab position to help realize Arab aspirations and hopes. Coordination and cooperation to advance joint Arab action in accordance with the principles and goals charted by the DD within the context of the Arab League are a national and pan-Arab necessity at present. They are also a responsibility that should be pursued firmly and relentlessly.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: The positive and good results produced by the DD states foreign ministers' meetings will undoubtedly promote Syria's role and honorable pan-Arab efforts to bring the Arabs together and reach a joint Arab stand that would make strong and effective contributions toward the promotion of the peace process and implementation of the relevant international legitimacy resolutions, which was a prerequisite for the resumption of talks on the Syrian track to ensure complete withdrawal from the Golan and achieve just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East region.

Radio: World Peoples Look Forward to 'Coexistence'

JN3012152595 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 30 Dec 95

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: A year will end tomorrow, and a new year will begin the day after. Last year was full of events and developments, and the new year comes amid many signs of more challenges. Our people always carry good wishes for all mankind, have more faith in their land, rights, and future, and their aspirations have always been legitimate on the national, pan-Arab, and humanitarian levels. They will always look for restoring their full territory and rights and for achieving a just and comprehensive peace which will bring security and stability to the entire region. They will continue to hope for building a more secure and stable world where all developments turn into humanitarian facts which have been absent for a long time as a result of wars, conflicts, and political and economic shocks. The new year comes at a stage which is full of events and expectations. The current stage seems to be the labor which will bring forth a future stage in the history of Syria, the region, and the world.

In Syria, internal development is being entrenched and national unity is getting stronger under the leadership of President Hafiz al-Asad, who has become the symbol of all that is great in the life of our people, nation, and history. Generations are proceeding with him with self-confidence, national and pan-Arab constants, entrenched principles, sincerity for the masses, and love and faithfulness for the leader who has been too generous. This is why he deserved the masses' love and faithfulness in a march which has continued to confront the challenges of the present and the possibilities of the future which are imposed by the battle of peace.

In the pan-Arab arena, it seems, in light of many signs, that peace will bring many significant challenges, in a way which makes the current stage a key stage in the history of the entire nation, and where there will be a pressing need to mobilize resources, coordinate stands, and proceed firmly toward a consolidated stand which pools the nation's resources in order to be able to deter dangers, triumph in the self-accomplishment battle, and take the position which it deserves among the world's nations and peoples in the age of scientific advancement and on the thresholds of the 21st Century with all its requirements, on the technological, political, economic, and military levels. There will be no room except for the big blocs and the stands which are backed by intrinsic powers and pan-Arab capabilities.

On the international level, the world proceeds toward extinguishing the fires of more wars which are raging, and some of which are still threatening expanding wars and igniting hotbeds of tension in order to bring more catastrophes, tragedies, and setbacks which inflict human and economic losses on large parts of the world. The peoples of the world are looking forward to peace, security, stability, and coexistence, instead of war, fighting, disturbances, chaos, and conflict.

If we pray, along with the world peoples, for peace, we, in Syria, reiterate our commitment to a just and comprehensive peace which restores to us our territory and rights in full, guarantees security and stability for

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

all sides, secures all sides' interests, and safeguards all sides' dignities. If these aspirations were not achieved in 1995 because of the Israeli obstacles, we hope, in light of the new Israeli tone, that in 1996 a just and comprehensive peace will be achieved in the region. We hope that 1996 will be the year in which all factors of the conflict, in terms of occupation and aggression, will be removed so that it will be possible to talk about stability, security, and peace which will turn a new leaf in the history of the region in the interest of its peoples and the entire world's peoples.

Radio: Measures Must Accompany Good Intentions

JN0201145696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1239 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Official Syrian-Israeli talks will resume in Maryland tomorrow with the participation and sponsorship of the United States. These talks continued in an informal way during the new year holiday. Following the first round of talks, head of the Syrian delegation said that these talks dealt with all the elements of the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. He noted that there was still a gap in stands which Israel should bridge and narrow.

The second round which will be held tomorrow is a decisive one. It will enable the two negotiating delegations to set a specific agenda, after which U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will leave for the region to discuss means of advancing the peace process. Israel's responsibility is great in this regard, for it is known that Syria has committed itself to full peace for full withdrawal, made every possible effort to contribute to the success of the U.S. initiative, and sincerely and responsibly responded to the efforts of Secretary Christopher and President Clinton. It has not set conditions for peace other than implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions and the Madrid conference bases, and the translation of the basic principle of the U.S. initiative; namely, land for peace, into a concrete reality. Israeli officials themselves, particularly Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, have acknowledged Syria's desire to achieve an honorable peace. Peres has adopted a policy different from that of his predecessor Rabin in terms of the need to reactivate talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, in terms of Syria's central role in the peace process, and the priority of peace over the elections and individual gains; however, things will continue to depend on results, and there will be no alternative to translating words into deeds and intentions into facts. Regardless of how good intentions are, they cannot make peace unless they are accompanied by serious and concrete steps on the ground. It is no secret to anyone in the world that some quarters in Israel do not want peace, neither with Syria, nor with Lebanon, nor with the Arabs. In fact, these sides consider peace to be a threat to Israel's security and expansionist plans. Based on this, we say that accelerating the peace process and checking the Zionist extremists' plans hinge on actual participation by the Peres government in the peace process, and a response to its bases and requirements, particularly full withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 borders and from southern Lebanon. This should be done by laying the groundwork for defusing the situation in southern Lebanon by stopping the shelling of villages and towns and the inflicting of damage on civilians and their property.

Here, we should note that the Israeli voices that call for escalating military operations in southern Lebanon seek to foil peace efforts and abort any hope of achieving a comprehensive peace in the region. Without Syria and Lebanon, there will be no comprehensive peace. In fact, there will be no peace. There is currently a unique opportunity to achieve a comprehensive, honorable, and entrenched peace. This opportunity must not be lost as were previous ones.

Press on Expectations for 2d Round of Peace Talks

JN0301091696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary today entitled "Security Council Resolutions Are the Guarantee of Peace," the newspaper AL-BA'TH says: The second round of Syrian-Israeli talks will begin in Maryland today. The negotiators and the U.S. sponsor are well aware of a Syrian premise which stipulates that peace is the equivalent of territory, and that the relevant UN Security Council [UNSC] resolutions that deem inadmissible the acquisition of others' territory constitute the greatest guarantee of just, durable, and comprehensive peace.

AL-BA'TH adds: A comprehensive peace will best guarantee regional stability. Comprehensiveness here means that there must be peace on both the Syrian and Lebanese fronts. Such peace must be free of potential hindrances. This is possible if the U.S. initiative, which is grounded in the principle of exchanging territory for peace, is upheld.

AL-BA'TH goes on to say: Today's Maryland round of talks will determine when U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher will begin his next Middle East tour to examine the requirements of peace at a time when peace needs to be comprehensive and durable.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

AL-BA'TH concludes by saying: Syria's desire for peace cannot be dismissed. Hence, the U.S. sponsor needs to make the Israeli side subscribe to peace in accordance with the initiative that constituted the bedrock of the Madrid conference, and also in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions, which include provisions regarding the dismantlement of occupation and resolving the Middle East conflict.

Under the headline "A Unique Opportunity and Israel's Responsibility," the newspaper TISHRIN notes the statement made by Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres on the eve of the second round of the Maryland talks that peace with Syria will create a unique opportunity to end war in the Middle East, and that dutifulness dictates that an agreement with Syria be reached. Peres added that Syria wants Israel to quickly make a straightforward pronouncement expressing willingness for withdrawal from the Golan.

TISHRIN believes that Peres was absolutely right in this assessment because the Golan is Syrian territory. It is the key issue embedded in the heart of each and every Syrian. No Syrian could rest assured before the whole Golan is returned to the homeland.

TISHRIN adds: In the same vein, Syria calls upon Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon, given the inseparableness of the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, and also because only a comprehensive peace would bring security and stability to the region. In the course of its efforts to achieve just and comprehensive peace, Syria is not setting any conditions other than those set by the world community. Syria is only demanding the implementation of UNSC Resolutions 242, 338, and 425. It is also demanding that the U.S. initiative, which is grounded in the land-for-peace formula, be upheld.

TISHRIN goes on to say: Syria cannot judge Israel's credibility regarding the peace process by its intentions or statements, but rather by its acts and deeds. It is withdrawal that would lend credence to Israeli rhetoric in this regard.

TISHRIN concludes by saying: The second round of talks is highly important, for it provides a unique opportunity. It is Israel's job not to miss this opportunity. For it can render this round of talks a success by subscribing to the relevant international legitimacy resolutions and seeking a true and honorable peace that would return rights to their lawful owners and bring security, stability, and dignity for all.

Under the headline "A New Round," the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Arab and international political and media quarters are looking forward with great interest to the outcome of the new Syrian-Israeli round of talks due to convene in Maryland. The importance of this round of talks is commensurate with the importance attached by all to the Israeli change of heart manifested in a new language used by senior Israeli officials — a language that has given rise to optimism that could produce concrete moves if Israel sets forth positive and realistic stands in line with the relevant UNSC resolutions. Israel must, once and for all, abandon attempts to make small gains. Likewise, it must brush aside impossible conditions, which precluded progress and grounded the peace process to a complete halt.

AL-THAWRAH adds: Syria is keen on peace. It is committed to the relevant international legitimacy resolutions. It is looking forward to a just and comprehensive peace that would ensure the restoration of its territories and rights. It cannot bargain over a single inch of its territory, nor can it abandon a single national or pan-Arab right. It cannot accept anything short of a just and comprehensive peace that would realize its national and pan-Arab aspirations and uphold the will of the international community.

AL-THAWRAH concludes by saying: Undoubtedly, the optimism that dominated the first round of talks will remain guarded unless Israel demonstrates a measure of seriousness conducive to progress and peace. Once this happens, optimism will have produced a palpable reality, and positive ideas and climates will have turned into an accelerated effort to establish just and comprehensive peace.

Paper Urges Eritrea To Withdraw Forces From Island

JN0101071096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 1 Jan 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its 'Opinion' column, TISHRIN comments on the Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the Red Sea islands and international efforts to settle the dispute. The newspaper notes that Yemen welcomed mediation efforts and accepted international arbitration regarding the question of al-Hanish al-Kabir island, which was captured by Eritrean forces. Yemen called for the withdrawal of these forces before beginning negotiations. Eritrea, however, proposed the withdrawal of the forces of the two countries from all the islands and then having recourse to the International Court of Justice.

TISHRIN adds: No doubt, Eritrea's action, in the first place, was a cause of concern for Arab states, which rejected the creation of a new problem in the Horn of Africa. This problem is not in the interest of the Arabs or

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

the Africans. Eritrea should have resorted to neighborly Arab and African states, and not to military action, since military action spoils neighborly relations and increases tension in the Red Sea region.

The newspaper adds: From this premise, Eritrea, which responded to the mediation mission undertaken by the UN secretary general and by Ethiopia, could take a more positive step after releasing the Yemeni prisoners by withdrawing its forces from al-Hanish island. This step should be taken in light of the consequences of escalation, which will harm Eritrea's relations with the Arabs.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Afghanistan

Rabbani Said Not To Mention Power Transfer

LD0201182396 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, in an interview with the WAHDAT newspaper, Ustad Sa'id said: The Kabul administration delegations [words indistinct] are completely without authority and power, and in Ustad Rabbani's recent announcement of talks offer [to the opponents], nothing has been mentioned about the transfer of power. He said: Rabbani will hand over power to a commission that is acceptable to all sides, and let the nation decide its fate itself.

Ustad Sa'id said: Our stance in the past and now was and is that so long as he does not announce the transfer of power and does not agree with the demilitarization of Kabul, the current problem cannot be resolved. He added: Hekmatyar has not met any government delegation and reports on his meeting with it are unfounded. Ustad Sa'id insisted it would have been a lot better if Rabbani had announced his resignation instead of announcing [his readiness] to visit Kandahar and Mazar-e Sharif.

Opposition Proposes Talks on Rabbani Replacement

LD0301091896 Tehran IRNA in English 0639 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Jan. 3, IRNA — The main Afghan opposition alliance has suggested the holding of talks by the Kabul administration and all warring groups to select an acceptable "personality" that could take over power from President Borhanoddin Rabbani.

"We have proposed to the representatives of Rabbani and to the Taleban that negotiations take place to agree on an individual who would be acceptable to all groups," Maulvi Torkistani [name as received], representative of Uzbek militia leader general 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, he told IRNA here yesterday.

Dostam's Islamic movement in northern Afghanistan is a member of the four-party Afghan opposition alliance that includes the Hezb-e Eslami led by Golboddin Hekmatyar, the National Liberation Movement [Nejat-e Meli] of former President Sebghatollah Mojadeddi and the Hezb-e Wahdat of Karim Khalili.

"In principle, none of the Afghan groups have opposed our suggestion," he said when asked about the response of the Rabbani government and the Taleban militia.

He further said the ideal candidate to replace Rabbani should have a "moderate" stand, adding that he should also travel around the country and meet with people from various strata of society to evolve a mechanism for the future government of Afghanistan.

Asked about the 28-man interim council proposed by U.N. special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri to assume power from Rabbani, Torkistani said, "Afghans have never accepted any outside formula. They only want international bodies to act as monitors."

He said the opposition alliance is ready to talk with the present Kabul administration but, "only if Rabbani resigns".

Rabbani recently sent a high-ranking delegation to meet Dostam in northern Mazar-e Sharif following his offer to go to the headquarters of the warring factions and discuss the formation of a new government.

Dostam Refuses To Welcome Rabbani as President

LD0201194696 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A correspondent of the Radio Message of Freedom reported from Mazar-e Sharif that General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of the Junbish-e Meli [National Movement], said yesterday to Dr. Abdorrahman, head of the dispatched delegation of Kabul administration, that Dostum was not ready under any circumstances to welcome Ustad [professor] Rabbani in Mazar-e Sharif or in Sheberghan [Jowzjan Province] as president.

Our correspondent adds: General Dostam has said that Ustad Rabbani can be welcomed only at the capacity of an elder man and no any other protocol would be observed.

The report adds: Yesterday together with Dr Abdorrahman a 100-man guard of honor carrying their necessary equipments were sent to Mazar-e Sharif. The plan was to use the guard of honor when Rabbani arrives in Mazar-e Sharif's airport. General Dostam said to him in specific words that he was not prepared under any circumstances to welcome Ustad Rabbani in an official manner. There is no need for the guard of honor and he should take them back to Kabul.

The correspondent adds that for this reason Rabbani's visit to Mazar-e Sharif has been delayed.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Hekmatyar Refuses To Meet Rabbani Envoy in Jalalabad

LD0201160196 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Despite repeated requests by Kabul administration delegations, the amir of Hezb-e [Eslami] has not met with them. Although many Kabul administration delegations have come to Jalalabad and have tried to meet brother Hekmatyar, the mojahed amir of Hezb-e Eslami has not met with the delegations nor does he wish to meet them in the future. A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports to us from Jalalabad that brother Hekmatyar was in Jalalabad city yesterday and met party officials and local people at his residence. The Kabul administration wants to achieve two goals by holding talks with the High Coordination Council [HCC] leaders: It wants to prolong its rule and to create mistrust between the Taleban and the HCC; and it wants to create obstacles in the way of rapprochement between them.

Hezb-e Eslami believes that the Afghan problem will not be resolved as long as Rabbani fails to agree to the transfer of power to a commission that is acceptable to all involved sides. It is for this reason that despite repeated requests by Kabul administration delegations, the amir of Hezb has not agreed to meet them.

Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami Leader Talks With Minister

LD3112163495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Afghan leaders have started new political moves to find a peaceful solution to the Afghan problem. Reports reaching here from Bamian say that yesterday Dr. 'Abdol Rahman, the minister of civil aviation in Rabbani's government, met 'Abdol Karim Khalili, the president of the central council of Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party], and held talks with him on ways of resolving the current problem in Afghanistan.

According to a central news unit report, last night in his meeting with the delegation from Kabul, 'Abdol Karim Khalili said he held talks with 'Abdol Rahman on the formation of a broad-based government and the transfer of power.

It is to be said that the Taleban have also accepted Borhanoddin Rabbani's proposal to hold talks with government opponents.

Coordination Council Said Ready for Peace Talks

LD3012112495 Tehran IRNA in English 0909 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Dec. 30., IRNA — The Coordination Council welcomed Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani's remarks indicating his readiness to visit opposition headquarters and talk to opposition leaders to resolve the Afghan crisis.

The Taleban, has however refused to talk to Rabbani, reports said here.

The Coordination Council is an umbrella organization comprising the Islamic Party led by Golboddin Hekmatyar, the National Islamic Movement headed by 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, the Islamic Unity Party of 'Abdol Karim Khalili and the National Liberation Front of Sebghatollah Mojadeddi.

According to a government source the council members are ready to hold serious negotiations with the Rabbani government.

Meanwhile, a spokesman of the Islamic Unity Party admitted that representatives of the Afghan president, led by Aviation Minister 'Adbol Rahman, met with 'Abdol Karim Khalili in Bamian yesterday. 'Abdol Rahman also met on Thursday with Homayoun Jarir, the deputy of Hekmatyar.

A delegation is to be sent to Mazar-e Sharif, central Balkh in northern Afghanistan, for talks with Dostam aimed at paving the way for Rabbani's meeting with members of the Coordination Council. The Afghan president is scheduled to go to Mazar-e Sharif within the next two days to meet Dostam.

The Taleban, has however turned down the offer to negotiate with the Kabul administration, saying that it has no confidence in Rabbani. It added that it would continue fighting to capture Kabul and topple the present Afghan Government.

In another development, shellings on Kabul in the past 24 hours has led to death of three civilians and wounding of five others.

The Kabul security Commission said the Taleban fired at least seven rockets and katyusha missiles on Kabul yesterday with long- range artillery, damaging residential quarters.

At least 15 explosions were heard in the Afghan capital yesterday morning. There were no reports on casualties or damage as curfew has been imposed.

Attacks on the Afghan capital since September 23, have killed and injured more than 1,500 and destroyed many houses.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Iran Said Trying To Reconcile Political Entities

LD0201213496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Ala'eddin Borujerdi has paid a visit to Afghanistan. His program is to bring Hezb-e Wahdat [Islamic Unity Party] and Junbesh [Dostam's party] closer to the Kabul administration. Iran is showing extreme interest in this matter. Iran repeatedly suggested to the Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] leadership that they reach an understanding with the Kabul administration. They said they were ready to give firm guarantees on meeting the Hezb conditions and on the implementation of an agreement. However, the Hezb leadership did not accept their proposals and told them neither will they resolve the crisis by such measures nor will we get nearer to a solution. We said to them: Rabbani must resign and an administration that is acceptable to all should come into being that will prepare the ground for a legal an elected government through elections. Iranian officials were disappointed at Hezb's stance and argument and slowed their activities as regards bringing about an understanding and agreement between Hezb and Kabul. But, in connection with Junbesh and Hezb-e Wahdat, not only did they not reduce their activities, but they also increased them. Eventually an important Kabul delegation went to Bamian and then moved on to Mazar-e Sharif and Sheberghan and consequently, there are now talks about Ustad Rabbani's visit to those areas.

This situation raises questions about the future of the High Coordination Council. In fact, some hands are strongly working to destroy the High Coordination Council. Everyone of them wants to eliminate the council for its various goals. Some of them want to light the fire of sensitivities and bigotry once again, and some try to divide the organizations and forces that have come together in the High Coordination Committee, and to get rid of their danger and thus benefit from it.

We cannot reject the idea that the High Coordination Council will not take such steps in their own interests, and that one cannot call it a political initiative. However, we can say this with full confidence that by taking such a step, the existence of the Coordination Council will not be in danger, or its activities or identity be questioned. Or, in one way or another, it contradicts the interests of a member or members of the Council. The (?prospect) of talks between Junbesh and Hezb-e Wahdat do not seem very bright [as heard]. One reason for this is the (?bad) record of Kabul administration [words indistinct]. However, as mentioned above, if a new political step or decision is made it will not have any negative effect on the activities or role of the Coordination Council. The Council's member forces will keep the Coordination Council active with more unity, understanding, and reciprocal respect. The Council, as an important and fundamental force, is considering and taking action in regard to the events.

Hekmatyar Gives News Conference on Current Policies

LD3112201595 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] The high session of the High Coordination Council [HCC] will decide the future policy of the Council. The formation of the HCC was our historic achievement. By forming the HCC we aborted a great conspiracy. These points were made by brother Hekmatyar, the mojahed amir of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], at a news conference.

A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reported to us from Jalalabad that yesterday brother Hekmatyar spoke in detail at a news conference held at the 1st Corps' headquarters about the current political and military situation of the country. Answering a question brother Hekmatyar said: The communists were offering us privileges but we refused to take part in a coalition administration with them. Towards the end of Najib's presidency, the Russians offered us that they would give us all ministerial posts in the government that we would demand. Najib told me that he accepted me as a leader. But we told the communists that we could not offer them anything except general amnesty.

Answering another question brother Hekmatyar said: explosions are carried out in Pakistan by the very people who committed these acts previously, too. In the past the acts of subversion were carried out by the KGB and the KHAD, but now the KHADists carry out those acts. Previously, Hezb security was preventing many acts of subversion and did not allow the enemy to accomplish its sinister goals. Our correspondent says that the news conference started at 0900 and ended at 1230.

Three Rabbani Commanders Defect to Hezb-e Eslami

LD0101164296 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] source in Samangan reports that yesterday three Kabul administration commanders by the names of Mulla Zaher Hakimi, Rais Amir Bey, and Amir Hafizollah

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Kashefi and 70 of their men defected to Gholam Sakhi, the Hezb-e Eslami commander in Samangan, in Roi Doab, Samangan Province. The report says that they were armed with two DSK machine guns, two PK machine guns, five RPG7 rocket launchers, and 61 light weapons which were handed over to the mojahedin. The report adds that a large number of people are seeking refuge in the High Coordination Council controlled areas from the persecution of the Supervisory Council.

Taleban Leaders Hold Meeting With Paktia Elders

LD0101165296 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A meeting has been held by the Taleban in the Shar-e Naw area in Paktia Province. The meeting was attended by the elders of Zazi, Kharoti, Moqbel, Chamkani, Mangal, Andar, Ghalzi, and other tribes as well as students of Paktia Province seminaries. The meeting was addressed by Paktia's elders and the Taleban leaders. Mawlawi Gholam Faruq, a Taleban leader, said: The people of Paktia have a vivid and ancient history and all of them have combat experience. He said Paktia has been a defensive force of Afghanistan in the past and still is.

The local councils in Paktia had resolved not to hand over their weapons to the Taleban and their high council accepted this proposal. Mawlawi Gholam Faruq reassured tribal elders, religious scholars, and jihadi commanders that they will be given an equal share in government affairs provided experienced elders, religious scholars, and intellectuals can also participate in the administration.

Rabbani Chairs High State Council Meeting

LD3112194395 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] A session of the High State Council was held this morning under the chairmanship of Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani, the president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The secretariat of the High State Council reported to BAKHTAR that during today's session the political situation in the country and the recent developments were discussed. The government initiative and readiness for ensuring peace were approved as the effective way of resolving the problems.

Mohammad Akbari, a member of the High State Council, who had been to the north of the country as a head of a government delegation, presented the report of his meetings with the authorities there, including General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, to the session. The High State Council described the report as positive. Because there is goodwill and an inclination to resolve the problems through talks and peaceful means, the hope has been express that in the near future peace and universal security will be ensured in the country.

Islamic Unity Party Denies Rabbani Released POWs

LD3112210995 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party] has refuted Rabbani's claims about the release of its POWs. A Wahdat-e Eslami source called the Rabbani-Masud band's claim of releasing six of its prisoners unfounded.

It is to be said that a few days ago Radio Mashhad reported the release of the prisoners. The Kabul administration's announcement came at a time when its forces launched an attack on Wahdat-e Eslami positions.

Rocket Attack Kills 20, Injures 48 in Kabul

BK0301092996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0914 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan 3 (AFP) — Twenty civilians, including five children, were killed and 48 injured in the first rocket attack of 1996 on the besieged Afghan capital, witnesses and hospital staff said Wednesday.

Ten of the victims died instantly when a hail of rockets struck the southern Kabul suburb of Karte Seh [name as received] late Tuesday, while the remaining 10 died on the way to hospital or after admission, they said.

The salvo of about 20 rockets, which the government said was fired by the Taleban militia, struck a busy bazaar area claiming more victims than any similar attack here in recent months, locals said.

The barrage struck two tailors' shops, a private home and bustling market streets, showering the area with deadly shards of twisted aliminium which sliced into stall holders and passers-by.

"I was standing behind a wall when the rockets started landing all around the area. When it ended, I saw bodies everywhere and the wounded were moaning and crying," local resident Mohammed Arif told AFP.

Among the dead was a mother, her woman friend and her two young children who were killed when one of the Soviet-built BM 21 rockets struck their small home near the market, locals said.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

A one-year-old baby and a six-year old girl were killed in the bazaar — along with six other people including a tailor — while a fifth toddler died of his wounds later in one of Kabul's hospitals.

"We had to bury almost a whole family including the two small children," said one of the witnesses to the rocket strike.

A total of 28 victims of the barrage were still in hospital Wednesday, including three children who received serious wounds when their mother was killed, Dr Mazia of a nearby hospital said.

Pools of congealed blood which had seeped into the dusty earth still marked the scene of the market-place carnage early Wednesday.

Government officials blamed the attack on the Islamic Taleban who have been encamped around Kabul for nearly three months, saying state forces had later launched a retaliatory attack south of the city.

"We launched an attack on the Taleban after we noticed unusual movements of soldiers and tanks and following the deliberate rocketing by them of residential areas of Kabul," a defence ministry source said.

He said the two forces exchanged heavy volleys of artilley, rocket and missile fire for two hours on one of Kabul's three frontlines at Rish Khkor, but added that no ground had been won by either side.

No independent confirmation was immediately available here of who carried out the rocket attack. A fresh rocket salvo early Wednesday injured another two civilians in central Kabul, doctors said.

Kabul has come under almost daily rocket and artillery barrages over recent months which have claimed scores of lives, including 31 since the government proposed peace talks with the other warring factions a week ago.

In an unprecedented move, Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani offered to travel to the provincial strongholds of all the combatants here, including the Taleban, for talks on establishing a new broad-based administration.

The Taleban at first rejected the offer, but have since softened their stance saying they would be prepared in principle to consider talks.

The Taleban, who sprung up from the Koranic schools of Pakistan a year ago, have vowed to seize Kabul and topple the government which it regards as illegitimate.

They have already seized nearly two-thirds of the country from the government and other warring sides, changing the balance of power here after more than three years of civil war.

Kabul Government Bombs Taleban in Maydanshar

LD0201151096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As a result of Kabul administration's bombing of Maydanshar, 20 people were killed or injured. A source close to the Taleban told a Radio Message of Freedom correspondent that yesterday the Kabul coalition administration heavily bombarded [Taleban] centers in Maydanshar and villages [around] it, resulting in 20 Taleban and local people being killed or injured.

Bangladesh

Train Services Disrupted Due to Blockade

BK3012165495 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Almost the entire railway system was disrupted due to the opposition parties' blockade program in the country today. Bangladesh Railway sources said that the Dhaka-bound Noakhali Express was derailed somewhere between Tongi and Dubail; the driver was injured in the incident. The incident occurred due to the removal of four fishplates from the track by unidentified persons. No train operated on the Dhaka-Chittagong route due to the opposition activists' blockade at several places. Train services on the Dhaka-Sylhet route also remained suspended due to the blockade. The Chittagong Express was halted at Sripur on its way to Jagannathganj from Dhaka. Ferry services in the western region were totally disrupted due to the blockade program.

Progress Seen in Efforts To End Political Impasse

BK2912153295 Dhaka JANAKANTHA in Bengali 25 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Aman-ud-dowla]

[FBIS Translated Text] It has been hinted that the gap between the ruling and opposition parties on resolving the stalemate has narrowed to a great extent. Compared to the past, the differences between the two sides now center on one or two issues. Talks held between the two sides over the past few days under the mediation of U.S. Ambassador David Merrill have progressed a long way and are nearing an agreement. Sheikh Hasina [former opposition leader and president of the Awami League] is represented at the talks by Amir Hossain Amu, while the prime minister is represented by Shamsul Islam, minister for information and commerce.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Regarding the progress of the talks, it has been learned that the government has agreed to make a nonpartisan person chief adviser in addition to a 10-member Advisory Council representing the two sides. The government has not yet agreed to give this chief adviser executive powers equivalent to those of the prime minister. The government says that the president, assisted by the secretaries, will run the country during the interim period of the elections in accordance with the advice of the Advisory Council. The Awami League wants the chief adviser to be given executive powers. The Awami League has also agreed to modify its earlier stand slightly. The Awami League leader had said that she would hold talks with the prime minister after the prime minister resigned. Now she has agreed to hold talks prior to the prime minister's resignation if an understanding is reached before the talks on the main demand of making a neutral person chief adviser. If this is done, then the Awami League and all other opposition parties are prepared to participate in the elections. These should be held before 21 February according to the constitutional provision of 90 days [after the dissolution of Parliament].

It has been learned that the concerned liaisons in the diplomatic mediation are busy formulating a uniform outline on issues related to granting executive powers to the chief adviser, on how the president will appoint the Advisory Council, an administrative reshuffle, the amendment of the voters list, and other minor issues. This may take three or four days. If no new problems crop up, it is expected that the date and timing of the meeting between the two leaders, a joint declaration, and the resignation of Khaleda Zia as prime minister will be announced soon.

Shamsul Islam and Amir Hossain Amu maintained contacts yesterday. It has been learned that a tripartite meeting between Islam, Amu, and Merrill may be held today or tomorrow. Before leaving for Singapore, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina gave Amir Hossain Amu permission to continue the talks with the government. Meanwhile, the leaders of the ruling party have cautiously reacted to a proposal made by Sheikh Hasina during a meeting with newspaper editors on Saturday. She is willing to hold talks with the prime minister on the issue of the formation of a caretaker government provided these talks are broadcast live over radio and television.

BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] Secretary General Barrister Abdus Salam Talukdar, talking to reporters at the party's nomination center in Kakrail yesterday, said the party could have replied to this proposal by the Awami League leader if she had sent it formally through a letter or through her party leader holding talks with the government: If we can ascertain that this proposal is correct, we can make a decision at the party level on the issue of a live broadcast over radio and television; we only came to know about this proposal through the newspapers, however. When asked about newspaper reports regarding this proposal, Salam Talukdar said he personally considers this proposal positive from two points of view. First, the Awami League leader said earlier that she would not sit for talks unless the prime minister resigned. Now, it seems that she is prepared to hold talks with the prime minister. Second, it seems that the opposition leader has come to understand the requirement about holding elections within 90 days. When asked whether this statement by Sheikh Hasina will help resolve the stalemate, he said: This can only be known after she sits for talks, but I am optimistic. He hinted that talks are continuing between the two sides. Nazrul Islam Khan, the office secretary of the BNP who was alongside the secretary general, gave the same reply to questions raised by journalists.

Commission 'Partially' Revises Election Schedule

BK0201134596 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Election Commission has partially modified and revised the schedule for the forthcoming parliamentary elections. A gazette notification of the Election Commission issued in Dhaka today said the decision to revise the election schedule was made after taking into consideration the issue of participation by all political parties in the coming general elections and at the request of different political parties.

According to the revised schedule, the last date for submission of nomination papers to the concerned returning officer or assistant returning officer is 8 January. Scrutiny of nomination papers will take place the following day, 9 January. The last date for withdrawal of nomination papers is 14 January. The gazette added that the date for holding the elections, 7 February, remains unchanged.

Directive To Maintain Order During Elections

BK0101031796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0200 GMT 1 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The chief election commissioner, Mr. Justice A.K.M. Sadeque, has directed the members of the law enforcing agencies to discharge their duties with sincerity to maintain a favorable law and order situation for holding the ensuing parliamentary polls in a free, fair, and impartial manner.

He was speaking at the concluding session of a workshop on electoral offenses, irregularities, and mode of

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

their resistance in Dhaka yesterday. Officers in charge of 259 thanas [police stations] took part in the workshop. Justice Sadeque reminded the police officials that they are on deputation to the Election Commission during the election and stern action would be taken against those who will be charged (?due) to any irregularity, negligence of duty, or corruption. He also asked the local police administration to seriously deal with the violators of rules and regulations during the forthcoming Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] elections.

The law enforcing agencies recovered 57 firearms, 159 rounds of ammunition, and 44 explosives yesterday, the 11th day of the countrywide hunt against illegal arms. They also rounded up 521 people for keeping illegal arms and for involvement in various crimes.

Party To Participate in Parliamentary Elections

BK2712154295 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 27 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Progotishil Ganotantrik Shakti [Progressive Democratic Force] has decided to participate in the forthcoming parliamentary elections. This decision was made at a party meeting in Dhaka today presided over by party President Wahiduzzaman. It has also been decided to nominate over 250 candidates from the party.

Muslim League Asks Parties To Join Elections

BK3112091895 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Alhaj Mohammad Zamir Ali, secretary general of the Bangladesh Muslim League, has called upon all political parties to take part in the coming parliamentary elections. He was addressing a news conference marking the 89th founding anniversary of his party in Dhaka this afternoon. He said that the election is the most important prerequisite for democracy and the only means for the transfer of power. He said that constitutional continuity and the democratic process must be maintained in the greater interest of the nation.

In reply to a question, Zamir Ali said that the Bangladesh National Front, comprising eight parties, including the Muslim League, will file nomination papers for all the 300 seats of the parliament. He added that his party believes in civilized and positive politics and is vehemently opposed to the politics of destruction and terrorism. The news conference was also attended by the party's central leaders.

BNP Waiting for Agreement on 'Advisory Council'

BK2712120495 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 24 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by Nazmul Ashraf]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The ruling BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] is now awaiting a formal announcement from the opposition parties, especially the Awami League [AL], that they would accept an advisory council under the President for holding the forthcoming election, an influential minister said yesterday.

"Let AL chief Sheikh Hasina announce that she is ready to discuss such an arrangement (that Hasina proposed on January 10 this year) after the Prime Minister resigns," the minister told THE DAILY STAR last night on condition of anonymity.

In this regard, another BNP leader said that they were now expecting the AL to come to an understanding soon. "We will be waiting until the deadline for filing of nomination papers on January 3," the BNP leader said.

"The BNP is unlikely to make public its final list of candidates for the forthcoming election till the deadline, expecting that the crisis will be resolved," he added.

According to sources close to the negotiators in both the ruling party and the Opposition, the gap between the two sides has been narrowed to a "large extent". But it is yet to take a concrete shape as both the sides are striving for gaining maximum benefit, the sources said.

The ruling party was even considering seeking a judicial reference on the formation of the proposed advisory council, once the major opposition parties accepted the idea, another source in the BNP said adding nothing in this regard could happen unless the Opposition sat for talks.

India

Three Killed in Bomb Explosion in Central Delhi

BK0301115696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1135 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At least three persons were killed and several injured in a bomb explosion today in the crowded Sadar Bazaar area of central Delhi. According to initial reports from police, the explosion took place near a tonga stand on the Kutub Road. A number of fire tenders have been sent to the area, which is the capital's main business district. Police have cordoned off the area. The injured have been rushed to hospital.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Kashmiri 'Militant Outfit' Claims Credit

BK0301125396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At least three persons were killed and several injured in a bomb explosion this afternoon in the crowded Sadar Bazaar area of central Delhi. Agencies have put the death toll at six. Initial reports say the explosion is believed to have occurred near a tonga stand. Fire Brigade sources said nine fire tenders have been rushed to the spot to put out the blaze. Senior police officials have rushed to the spot.

Meanwhile, a Kashmiri militant outfit has claimed responsibility for the explosion.

'Pakistan-Trained Militants' Killed in Kashmir

BK0201150296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, two Pakistan-trained militants were among the three killed while security forces apprehended five militants in the Kashmir Valley during the last 24 hours. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was also recovered in different search operations in the valley.

According to an official spokesman in Jammu, a minor blast took place at Mendhar in Punch District in which a 12-year-old boy was injured.

Army Recovers 150 Kgs of Explosives in Kashmir

BK0301020696 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Jammu and Kashmir, the army has recovered 150 kilograms of explosive from Pakistan-backed militant outfits. The explosive was aimed at destroying sensitive installations in Jammu and Kashmir and New Delhi on the Republic Day. An army spokesman said in Srinagar that the seven boxes recovered yesterday contained dynamite sticks which could be used to make (?and provide) such devices.

Rao Cancels Punjab Trip; Assassination Threat Denied

BK0301075196 Hong Kong AFP in English 0745 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (AFP) — Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao cancelled a trip Wednesday [3 January] to the state of Punjab because of bad weather, officials said, denying that it was called off because of a reported threat to his life.

Rao had been scheduled to take a special aircraft to the Punjab city of Patiala, 200 kilometers (125 miles) northwest of here, but the flight was cancelled because of "dense fog," an official spokesman said here.

"Visibility was near zero at Patiala this morning," the spokesman said. "So the visit was cancelled."

Rao had been scheduled to inaugurate the 83rd Indian Science Congress in the northern city and award prizes to scientists. He would have returned to the capital after three hours.

The prime minister last visited Punjab in September after the car bomb assassination of the state s chief minister Beant Singh by Sikh separatists, and officials had mounted unprecedented security in Patiala on Wednesday.

Thousands of policemen were brought into the city from all over Punjab, India's only Sikh-majority state, and the conference venue, the university, was sealed off. Scientists were given special invitations to attend.

The spokesman said the visit was not called off for security reasons. "Not at all," the official said. "It is because of weather."

The cancellation came some 10 days after Punjab police announced the arrest of three Sikh separatists who had allegedly plotted to assassinate the prime minister when he visited Patiala.

The police said explosives had been seized from the three men along with a remote-control device which was to have triggered the bomb.

A Sikh separatist drive to establish a separate homeland in Punjab has left more than 20,000 people dead since 1983, although the drive has been on the wane in recent years.

Rao Announces Package To Resolve Water Dispute

BK0201053596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The prime minister has announced a three-point interim package to resolve the Cauvery water dispute between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Under it, Mr. Narasimha Rao has asked Karnataka for the immediate provisional release of six tmc [expansion unknown] of water at the rate of one tmc per day. It will be in addition to the quantity stipulated in the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's order of 19 June 1991. This is less than the 11 tmc of water awarded in the tribunal's order last month. Mr. Rao has said as per the Supreme Court's orders, he has taken into consideration the need for saving standing crops in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The prime minister outlined the details of the package in separate letters addressed

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

to the chief ministers of riparian states. The decision follows two rounds of consultations Mr. Rao had in New Delhi with the chief ministers of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Pondicherry. On Saturday, he held a meeting with the four chief ministers, leaders of political parties, MP's, and MLA's [Members of Legislative Assembly] from these states. On the issue of divergent claims by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka regarding water storage levels and immediate requirements of water for saving crops in both the states, the prime minister has appointed a three-member expert committee. The committee has been asked to complete its work by the 10th of this month. Mr. Rao asked the chief ministers of both the states to extend their cooperation to the expert group in finding a solution to the problem. The prime minister also proposed to convene a meeting of the Water Resources Council early next month to discuss and adopt policy guidelines for sharing interstate river waters. All the state chief ministers are members of the council. Policy guidelines to be adopted at the meeting will involve various issues like resettlement of people affected by projects, use of ground and surface water, and the National Water Information Bill.

The Karnataka chief minister has convened an all-party meeting in Bangalore today to discuss the package. The Tamil Nadu chief minister has also convened a similar meeting in Madras today to discuss the package. She has invited farmers associations and social welfare organization also to take part in the meeting.

The Union water resources minister, Mr. V.C. Shukla, said that the prime minister has finalized the formula in the larger interest of the country. In a statement in Raipur, he said both Tamil Nadu and Karnataka will be partially satisfied with the package.

Pakistan's Refusal of Visas for Team Criticized

BK0201160296 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has criticized the decision of Pakistan not to issue visas to the junior Indian hockey team to take part in the World Youth Hockey Tournament now being held at Rawalpindi. In a statement issued in New Delhi today, the External Affairs Ministry described the decision as a deliberate move to inhibit normalization of relations. It said India always welcomes Pakistani teams and sportspersons whenever they wish to take part in a sporting event, as in the recent SAF [South Asian Federation] Games.

Editorial Ponders Bhutto's Offer of Kashmir Talks

BK0301115496 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 2 Jan 96 p 8

[Editorial: "Benazir's New Year Resolution?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Could it be that the Pakistan Prime Minister, Ms Benazir Bhutto, has made a New Year resolution to be more civil to her neighbours? On the face of it, her extending what looks like an olive branch by announcing her preparedness to hold "purposeful" talks with the Prime Minister, Mr PV Narasimha Rao, to resolve the Kashmir issue, would indicate that she has made a politically correct genuflection in accordance with the principles of good neighbourliness. A closer scrutiny, however, reveals that her vague offer of talks is prefaced with the usual subclauses designed to ensure that the process leading to normalisation of relations between the two countries remains at a stand till. The context in which she has made the offer—in the course of a conversation with a group of Pakistani journalists—also makes it amply clear that her remarks were designed for domestic consumption. Her statement followed close on the heels of the widely reported remarks of the Pakistani Leader of the Opposition and the former Prime Minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, who said he was "prepared to support to the hilt" any sincere effort that the Government of Pakistan made to improve relations with India. In the same breath, Mr Sharif asked quite rhetorically: "Why haven't the two Prime Ministers met each other?"

It would be worthwhile if Mr Rao took up Ms Bhutto's offer to comprehensively explore ways and means to remove irritants from Indo-Pakistan ties. In this context some of the ideas which Mr Nawaz Sharif made, especially his approach towards strengthening relations with India on the economic plane, bear further exploration. A "race in the field of trade and industry," as Mr Sharif put it, "rather than an arms race" is certainly a sound suggestion. There has been some talk of Pakistan debating the idea of extending the most favoured nation (MFN) status to its neighbour as a fallout of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) agreement. This would be a logical step to take, if Ms Bhutto is ready to back her words with meaningful follow-up action. It would also be worthwhile for Prime Minister Rao to begin a step-by-step engagement designed to improve bilateral relations in such a manner that it is possible to broach the more substantive issues. The problem is Ms Bhutto is likely to look upon such suggestions as being entirely gratuitous. Her reported observation that "it would have been more appropriate if Mr Sharif had taken me into confidence rather than fielding the most sensitive idea through the Press" shows

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

that her reaction has been dictated by petulance rather than any genuine desire to normalise relations with India.

Economy Seen as 'Healthier But Not Blooming'

BK0301122796 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 1 Jan 96 p 10

Article by Anand P. Gupta: "Economy Healthier But Not Blooming"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India's economic health was in bad shape five years ago as a result of inappropriate economic policies pursued by governments in the past. The bad policies were reflected in the huge current account deficit of $9.7 billion in 1990-91. With capital receipts of $8.4 billion, the country could manage its external deficit only by depleting its foreign exchange reserves to $1.3 billion.

The situation was deteriorating so fast that by June 1991 India's foreign exchange reserves sank to a mere $1.1 billion, which was not adequate to finance the country's imports for even three weeks. By July 1991, the Reserve Bank of India had to airlift 46.9 tonnes of gold to London as security for a loan of $400 million from the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan. Ironically, while the IMF trusted the RBI as a depository for the gold of other countries, the Bank of England and the Bank of Japan did not repose similar confidence. India was in a manner of speaking driven to the wall.

Viable Alternative

The country could not go on air lifting gold to solve its balance of payments problems. The first alternative was to substantially reduce the country's imports — by raising tariffs, by imposing quantitative restrictions on the import of a large number of goods, or by banning their import outright. The second alternative was to put in place an economic reform programme to promote growth that was consistent with a sustainable balance of payments situation. Indeed, the growth that we got during the 1980s was such that it was largely responsible for the severe balance of payments crisis that the country faced in 1991. Therefore the kind of growth that India needed was one that was consistent with a sustainable balance of payments situation. This required efficiency in the allocation of resources. In other words, resources had to be allocated to those sectors which had relatively high economic and financial rates of return.

To facilitate this a programme of economic reforms was put in place. Today, about five years later, India's economic health appears to be much better our forex reserves currently stand at about $17.5 billion; the current account deficit for 1995-96 is projected at $5 billion, the 1995-96 GDP is projected to be 7 per cent higher than that of 1994-95; industrial production has grown by 11.5 per cent during the first four months of 1995.

But is the current situation sustainable? According to the World Bank, "of India's $95 billion external debt, about $24 billion is due to be repaid in the next four years, with a peak of roughly $7 billion in 1996-97. This is in addition to the rollover of the short-term debt and the rollover of NRI [non-resident Indians] accounts. Added to the financing requirements of the current account deficit, this means that over the next four years India will need to mobilise about $40 billion of external finance — excluding the rollover of short-term debt and NRI accounts". And in case investment in the economy picks up along the lines that some recent projections suggest, the external financing requirements will be still higher.

Resource Mobilisation

Will India be able to mobilise external resources of this magnitude? Much will depend on what happens on the following fronts: reduction in public sector deficit increase in exports and in earnings on the invisibles account; increase in inflows on the capital account and control of inflation. India's budgetary deficit is perceived to be excessive and this is a major factor influencing the assessment of the country's economic health by the international credit rating agencies such as Standard and Poor's. Public enterprises have been and continue to be major contributor to this deficit. Yet nothing worthwhile is happening on this front.

Exports are growing. This is a healthy trend. But exports as also receipts on the invisibles account have to grow faster so as to produce a surplus on the current account. This does not appear likely, given the constraints on the infrastructural front. And if these constraints are; addressed through massive investments in infrastructure, this will only add to pressures on the current account.

As regards the inflows on the capital account, there seems to be a growing consensus in favour of attracting foreign direct investments. But whether this consensus will remain simply at the level of signing MOUs [memorandums of understanding] or will translate into actual inflows remains to be seen.

Finally, inflation will have to be controlled. If the inflation rate in India is higher than that in our major trading partner countries, the rupee will have to depreciate in order to maintain the competitiveness of our exports. But expectations of rupee depreciation may discourage FDI [foreign direct investment] . On the other hand, if inflation in India is relatively high and interest and exchange rates are not properly adjusted, capital may flow

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

out of the country. The upshot is that while India's economic health today is clearly much better than what it was in 1991, one cannot be sure that it will continue to be that way.

Iran

Effigies of Clinton, Gingrich Burned at Rally

LD0201185096 Tehran IRNA in English
1817 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 2, IRNA — Angry demonstrators in Tehran Tuesday, burnt coffins with effigies of Bill Clinton, and House Speaker Newt Gingrich in front the U.N. office in Tehran in protest against the allocation by the Congress of dlrs 20 million for subversive operations in Iran.

Demonstrators shouting familiar post-revolution slogans against the American Government also demanded that the U.S. be ousted from the United Nations in punishment for its adventurism.

Thronging in front of the U.N. office in Tehran that was sealed off by scaffolds they shouted "death to the United States," "the new world order is doomed to fail", and "Iran will not succumb to sanctions."

The star-spangled banner and coffins with effigies of Bill Clinton and House Speaker Newt Gingrich had been dragged on to the scene by another group in front of the demonstrators.

The demonstration was organized by "Anssar-e Hizbullah" (supporters of Hizbullah).

A speaker for demonstrators shouted in front of the U.N. building here that the Hizbullah would "make short work of the U.S. if the leader of the Islamic revolution and the (Iranian) president would allow them to."

He said the U.S. administration had suffered a severe defeat as the result of its failed economic sanctions against Iran because of the lack of support by the nations of world, and that the Congress was left with no alternative other than to allocate dlrs 20 million as a face-saving measure to challenge Iran.

The speaker also condemned the silence of the United Nations towards Washington's decision for clandestine subversive operations in Iran, and vowed that the Muslim world "would not remain silent about Washington's anti-Islamic plots, and will react even though it may be in the heartland of the United States."

Public Said To Want Boycott of U.S.-Made Goods

LD0301142796 Tehran IRNA in English
1302 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 3, IRNA — Washington's recent policies to counter the Islamic Republic of Iran has given rise to anti-American feelings of the people in Iran.

Hundreds of people in telephone contacts with the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) announced their resentment with the interventionist policies of the U.S.

In the telephone calls made from across the country during the past week, people also voiced their readiness to standing against the hostile U.S. measures.

Most of the callers urged the Iranian people to boycott American made commodities.

Ahmad Javadi, student of international relations at Tehran University termed Washington's policies against Iran as open intervention in Iran's internal affairs and a balatant violation of international laws.

He said Washington's 20 million dollar allocation to be spent on toppling the Islamic Republic of Iran is a flagrant example of state terrorism.

Velayati Protests to OIC on U.S. Actions

LD0201182496 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our country's foreign minister ['Ali Akbar Velayati] has written a letter to the secretary general of the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC], stressing: The White House's approval of the allocation of a budget for sabotage against the Islamic system of Iran is interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and nations.

Velayati's letter to [OIC Secretary General] Hamid Algabid states: The OIC Charter stresses the necessity for supporting the struggles of all Islamic nations to preserve their independence, national rights; respecting their right to determine their fate; non-interference in the domestic affairs of member countries, and respecting their sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

Velayati assures: All international laws and regulations reject state terrorism. America's recent action is clear evidence of state terrorism and interference in the internal affairs of this country.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Fadlallah Criticizes U.S. Decision Against Country

NC0201193396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Political and Islamic circles in Lebanon have denounced the latest U.S. decision against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Our correspondent in Beirut reports:

[Begin recording] Reactions continue in Lebanon to the U.S. plots concocted by the U.S. Administration against the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly the latest U.S. Congress' decision allocating $20 million for use in acts of terror against Iran. Various Islamic and national forces, parties, and personalities have released statements condemning the U.S. policy against the Islamic Republic of Iran. His eminence Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah described the U.S. policy as terrorist. In a statement today, he said: We wonder what the United States would do with the $20 million. He said that the United States is acting through the CIA to offer these funds to various terrorists to assassinate certain personalities, bomb some places, and confuse the economic situation in Iran. He said that these are acts of terror. The United States, he said, is trying to camouflage this terrorist activity by the CIA on the pretext that it wants Iran to return to a moderate line and avoid supporting terrorism and stirring up anarchy in the region. He pointed out that Iran is a victim of terrorism, be it U.S., European, or Zionist. He said that Iran did not embark on any terrorist acts. He noted that Iran is seeking to help the mujahidin, who defend their country, such as the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon and the mujahidin in occupied Palestine. [end recording]

Emami-Kashani on U.S. 'Hostility' to Iran

LD2912124395 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0826 GMT 29 Dec 95

[Second Friday sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani, member of Iran's Expediency Discernment Council and spokesman of the Guardian Council, at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] I will talk briefly about a number of issues, God willing. The first is about the persistent hostility of the White House toward Iran, its economic sanctions and other programs. I will talk about it briefly — that it stems from two things, firstly, and what effect has it has had in the world? And, second, what is our duty?

The root of America's attempts against the Islamic Republic of Iran lies in two things. The first is that Zionism, the usurper Israel, has penetrated the fabric of America and has taken control of the American government. Perhaps all the American people do not accept that, but most of them do accept that Zionism has a strong influence in America.

Israel considers Islam an obstacle in its way. Islam considers the Zionist government as unlawful. The Islamic Republic of Iran considers the usurper Israel as a malignant tumor in the world of Islam. The Islamic system, all Muslim peoples, all justice-seeking human beings, are Israel's staunch enemies. Since that is Israel's situation, and Israel has an influence in America — as American newspapers and others have clearly shown, according to their own writings — the pro-Zionist group in the U.S. Senate puts so much pressure on the others that in fear of pro-Zionist representatives, those representatives who are against the budget which protects Israel have yielded. [U.S.] University publications and lecturers cannot write articles against the usurper Israel, because they know that supporters [of Israel] who have infiltrated everywhere in America would put pressure on them.

The U.S. Government, because of its support for Israel and its subservience to Israel, does what the latter wants. We, therefore, see that the White House is so active against the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is on the other side of the world. Because its root is in Tel Aviv, a usurpation which those criminals and those ruffians have perpetrated.

That was one point. The second is the arrogant nature of America itself. Because arrogance — no matter what brings about evil thoughts — in itself leads to a series of evil thoughts. America says: I am a world superpower. Everybody should obey me. If I say such and such European company must not deal with Iran, it must not do so. If I say this action should be take, or that article should be written against the Islamic Republic of Iran, it should be done.

That is arrogance. Those two satans have joined forces. Arrogance on one side and that filthy Zionism on the other. As the Holy Koran says: The Jews are the enemies of the believers.

Those are the bases of so much effort on their part. Of course, it has been going on for some time. At times it is stepped up, and at other times they threaten more, or increase their pressure. But to what effect? The effect really is, as it is said, disgrace for them and bother for us; nothing more. America will gain nothing but the loss of the reputation of the American people — the rulers of the White House have no reputation to lose, like the Zionists, like Israel. And if one day the White House falls, like the Kremlin and the Soviet Union, it will be because of its support for the usurper

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Israel. [crowd chants "God is Great," "Khamene'i' is the leader," "Death to America" and to several indistinct names]

What I would like to say is that America's action has led to nothing but undermining its own reputation while at the same time creating some trouble for us [as heard]. The other thing is that right now, European countries no longer listen to America. One by one, they come forward and condemn America and its decision. They say why is it that you choose to interfere in other countries?

The case of a country which claims to be a superpower and comes forward to utter words that have no effect whatsoever reminds one of a tire full of air which is suddenly pierced by a pin. This is the degree of their disgrace; and I hope that, God willing, they will suffer even more disgrace.

Now let us deal with Europe. Europe is fully aware, and we do not need to repeat things here [as heard]. This awareness is shown by the fact that European countries with civilization and an advanced industrial and technological structure have voiced such a clear opposition to America's decision. They know that one should not heed America's demands. They know that the inebriation of an intoxicated person should not be tolerated. If it deals with one part of the world like the land of Islamic Iran in a manner reminiscent of an intoxicated hooligan, you can be sure that tomorrow it will do the same to other parts of the world. Tomorrow, it might do the same to Europe.

It is for this reason that the Europe of today is rightly moving toward greater cohesion. This is because it is aware and vigilant and it knows it should not allow the White House to display such a degree of arrogance. This brings hope and happiness to us and makes us realize that, praise be to God, the world bears these points in mind.

The great nation of Iran, too, has always been vigilant toward all these issues, because our people enjoy a high degree of social maturity. The nation is aware that these threats have no effect on its cohesion and on its decision to move toward an Islam whose banner will one day be hoisted across the world by the blessed hand of the Lord of Age [Shiite 12th imam]. In other words, our nation is mature enough to remain immune from such plots.

However, this social maturity should not be taken for granted and it should always be strengthened and enhanced. You know that the third and fourth days of Sha'ban have been named the days of the [Islamic Revolution] Guards and the war-disabled, respectively. Now, when when you look at the news and what is uttered in the White House, you realize what a great degree of sensitivity they have shows toward these two days and the fact that these days have been designated to honor the Basij and Guards personnel. They show sensitivity because they are frightened of these forces. That is to say they know that the Basij and the Guards and all the personnel in all our armed forces have always stood up against the enemy and have always made sacrifices, and will continue to do so. [passage omitted]

Commentary on Reaction to U.S. 'Policies'

LD0201232296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2055 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A huge rally was held in Tehran on Tuesday in protest against America's hostile, illegal, and interventionist policies vis-a-vis the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The rally was a manifestations of vigilance, national solidarity, and steadfastness of the people of Iran and their intention to nullify America's hostile policies.

Political observers are unanimous in their belief that the decision by the American Congress to allocate a $20-million budget to funding subversive operations in Iran as well as the decision to introduce a plan to prevent American companies from dealing with the Islamic Republic of Iran, will have no effect whatsoever on Iran's political and economic position.

What is certain is that insistence on continuing moves which are tantamount to direct intervention in the internal affairs of an independent country will only produce a clearer picture of the arrogant nature of America and will prove that Washington has no respect for the UN charter.

This will, moreover, reveal the hollowness of America's slogans on human rights and respect for the freedom and national sovereignty of other countries.

In fact, the opposition shown by a number of American and European companies and statesmen to the American decision shows that the implementation of these policies — even if seen purely from America's own domestic situation — will face fundamental problems and obstacles.

Furthermore, the opposition shown by non-American and mainly European companies to America's hegemonistic intentions is an indication of America's humiliation by the Europeans. This in itself is a great proof that these American policies have been defeated; a defeat which will lead to America's isolation in its conspiracy against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permisson of the copyright owners.

This is particularly salient in view of the picture painted by some political analysts who say that America is being left out of the arena of taking any part in Iran's economic projects, while Europe leads the way in this field. They predict that the relentless hostilities of America against Iran are partly the result of this economic and political debacle.

In addition, in order to carry out its illegal schemes, America must also put confronting the sentiments of world Muslims in its agenda. This will reveal the antagonism of America against the Islamic world more than ever before.

However. the most important factor which will bring defeat to America is the vigilance and the spirit of resistance of the people of Iran, who enjoy 17 years of experience in fighting against America's conspiracies. Today, too, they will stand firm and strong before the enemy, without any intention whatsoever to retreat even one single step.

Government Urged To Respond to 'Divisive' U.S. Move

NC2912174395 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 18 Dec 95 p 16

[Political commentary: "Satanic Moves and the Need for a Response"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the past few days, U.S. foreign policymakers and their international supporters and regional puppets have begun satanic moves against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Of course the new wave is not much different than the previous ones but we should not keep silent about it. This is because recognized Western circles usually interpret silence in the face of their claims as a sign of weakness.

1. In Washington, the Senate Banking Commission has approved a bill that calls for intensifying the embargo against the Islamic Republic of Iran which includes Clinton's sanctions against companies in West Europe, Japan, and all over the world that have signed deals with Iran.

This plan, which has been put forward by Senator Alphonse D'Amato, the head of the aforementioned commission, includes the following main clauses:

—Non-cooperation between the U.S. Export and Import Bank with companies dealing with Iran

—Ban on the export of American technology and industrial products to these companies.

—Limiting loans by U.S. banks to the aforementioned companies to $10 million annually.

—Financial institutions that deal with Iran on oil and gas will not be allowed to purchase U.S. Government loans [as published].

The above efforts are in fact part of the U.S.' new war against its European rivals rather than with Iran. This is because these countries did not obey the previous U.S. requests to boycott Iran, which isolated the United States. This isolation peaked when Iran's oil tenders were awarded this month to the French TOTAL company after the U.S. CONOCO company had voided its contract to develop the Sirri island oilfields.

2. The hue and cry raised by U.S. congressional speaker Newt Gingrich and some of his Republican cronies on the budget bill for the CIA is aimed at pursuing a plan to exert pressure on and topple the Iranian regime for which Gingrich wishes to increase the budget by $18 million.

This clamor resulted in the failure of talks on the $28 million budget for the CIA. This would be an overt violation of international norms and laws and is an ill-omened breach of the rights of nations to forge their own destinies. It is based on the atrophied thinking of the Western-style democracy and human rights.

3. In another similar move, the United States openly asked French President Jacques Chirac to sever relations with Iran. Of course, as in the past, this request will also receive a negative response. This request is in addition to other overt and covert requests that are made at nearly all kinds of talks between American officials and their foreign counterparts.

On the sidelines of the Bosnian peace talks in Dayton the American side also directly exerted pressure on Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic to provide a guarantee to sever ties with Iran in the future. This ploy was not successful either. However, what was the price the Muslim Bosnian president had to pay for his opposition to such a coercive U.S. request?

4. Shim'on Peres, the new Zionist pawn in the region, claimed after returning from the United States that Israel and the United States had decided to bolster their cooperation against Iran. Israel enjoys U.S. support as it is considered the center of its policies and actions against Islamic Iran in the region.

Of course, the late prime minister of the Zionist regime Yitzhaq Rabin had made similar claims every time he returned from Washington. However, Peres' claims are being made when political media are reporting that there is a ray of hope in the six month long impasse in the

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

talks between Syria and the Zionist regime. Circles close to the White House are trying to project the impression that now with Syria becoming more responsive, the only center opposed to the peace process is Tehran and that therefore this center should be subjected to pressure and isolated.

It appears that this cooperation to isolate Iran will be the precondition for all new compromise talks. Therefore, a reaction against all divisive policies and measures in the region is necessary.

5. The UN General Assembly's third committee on human rights has once again condemned Iran for violation of human rights in a resolution drafted under the direction and pressure of the United States, the Zionist regime, and the European Union.

The topics in this resolution are as usual, repetitive, spiteful, and far removed from reality. Its formulators are well-known to the impartial international community. It is very easy to expose its covert objectives with even the most basic analysis... [ellipsis as published]

It is necessary for the Islamic Republic of Iran's Foreign Ministry to respond to the subliminal wave that is being directed against the Islamic Republic of Iran by the political circles of the powers of world arrogance. Although the passage of time has inflicted disgrace on the enemies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, we can—by relying on active rather than a reactive stance—accelerate this process.

U.S. Policies Said To Stem From Hostility to Islam

LD2812142795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1050 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Our country's foreign minister, 'Ali Akbar Velayati, has sent an exposing letter to Mr. Butrus Butrus- Ghali, the UN secretary general. The letter has revealed many truths about recent U.S. hostile policies, moves by that country's Congress against the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Washington's international law breaking. [passage omitted]

This is not the first time America is resorting to policies of interference and terroristic activities to overthrow the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The White House rulers, so far repeatedly and regularly, have ignored the basic principles of the international laws of the UN Charter and the UN resolutions.

Legalizing or making official these aggressive and subversive policies against an independent country and a committed member of the United Nations, is a clear and obvious violation of these principles, including respect to national sovereignty and political independence of countries and non-interference in the affairs of others. In addition the policies are ignoring the bilateral Algerian accord [signed in 1975] and the U.S. official commitment for non-interference in the internal affairs of Iran such as political, military, and direct or indirect interference or interference in any other form.

U.S. Secretry of State Warren Christopher, however, remembers better than anyone else that his signature, as a then under- secretary state for foreign affairs, under the Algerian Accord is considered a binding document for that country's commitment to non- interference in Iran's affairs and deviation from that would be considered an obvious violation of international law and regulations.

Under the influence of personal grudges and their dependency on the Zionist groups, Christopher himself and the U.S. rulers will continue their historical animosity with the nation, government, and Islamic revolution of Iran. What make the Congress and Clinton's administration follow a policy of interference and subversive activities against Iran and support terrorism and law breaking is their blind hostilities toward Islam and Islamic Iran. For this end, America is trying to mar Iran's relations with other Muslims and countries in the world and to weaken the Islamic system by raising futile and unfounded claims.

In general, the recent policies adopted by the White House and the Congress against Iran represent their efforts to impose and spread America's one-side domination over the international community. The United Nations, therefore, as an organization that had been formed to protect international peace and security on the basis of acceptable international principles and regulations, and especially Mr. Butrus-Ghali, himself, have a principled responsibility to prevent the unilateral action and irresponsible and arrogant behavior by the American Government. Otherwise, the U.S. law-breaking policies will result in disastrous consequences for world security and international community.

Dailies Comment on U.S. 'Hostile Policies'

LD3012125695 Tehran IRNA in English 1225 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 30, IRNA — Two Tehran-based dailies in their editorials published Saturday commented on the new hostile policies adopted by the U.S. Administration against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Persian language daily, AKHBAR, referring to the 20 million dollar budget approved by the U.S. Congress

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

to be spent on toppling the Islamic regime in Iran, wrote that the U.S. intended to begin the new Christian year, 1996, with more hostile policies against Islamic Iran.

According to the daily, such hostile measures are taken at a time when America has failed to rally the support of its European and Japanese allies for its anti-Iran policies.

The editorial said that the U.S. has adopted various measures ranging from war to economic sanctions against Iran. But under present conditions it has preferred to use its propaganda machine as a new weapon against Tehran.

At a time when Israel is about to be recognized as a legitimate regime in the Middle East, the occupying forces are planning to conquer Arab markets and attract petrodollars of regional sheikhs, it said, adding that to this end, any country following its independent policies towards regional affairs is branded a threat to security.

Thanks to the speed of satellite technologies in transmitting news, propaganda can misportray independent countries as warmongers before the world public opinion.

"Propaganda can pave the way for accepting immoral and illegal policies in such a way that Bosnian children offer chocolates to White House soldiers and even take memorial pictures with them."

Under such circumstances, the daily proposed, Iran should try to inform the world of its ideology and should force the U.S. to show reaction, a reaction that will not be accepted by others.

"The U.S. has proved that it will not take any measure unless the time is ripe. We should strip the enemy of such an opportunity. today, deterrence can serve as the best offensive policy."

Commenting on the same subject, the English language daily IRAN NEWS said that the Clinton administration's plan of economic sanctions against Iran and the U.S. Congress' $20 million plan for a secret fund to be used against the Islamic Republic of Iran are now known for every body world-wide and are good examples of U.S. violation of international laws.

The daily also referred to Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati's Thursday letter to United Nations Secretary-General Butrus Butrus-Ghali in which he drew the attention of the world body's top man to what he called as the 'U.S. illegal behavior'.

"But the acceleration and enhancement of the economic embargo against Iran is a strategic tactic of the United States. The American strategy is to exert pressure on Europe and Japan to prevent them from entering into long-range development plans with Iran."

The editorial disclosed that the U.S. plot, in fact, has been designed to create a gap between Iran's industrial sector and its European and Japanese counterparts with an aim to fill up this gap with the American companies. So finally America's anti-Iran moves are in the interest of U.S. companies.

Tehran To Reinforce Support for Islamic Jihad

JN3012114795 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 1 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-URDUN has learned from well-informed diplomatic sources that the Iranian leadership decided to reinforce its support for the Islamic Jihad Movement after the assassination of Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, the movement's leader. The Iranian leadership also decided to offer the support and money needed to increase the movement's activity and to establish its bases and structure in the occupied territories. Moreover, the sources revealed that Tehran used to pay the Islamic Jihad Movement $400,000 per month to cover the movement's expenses in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and the occupied territories. They also revealed that Ayatollah Mohtashemi proposed establishing an office for the movement in Tehran if its offices in Damascus are closed.

Habibi, Velayati To Visit Syria 'Shortly'

JN0301130096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Report by Muhammad Sadiq al-Husayni in Tehran]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an exclusive statement to Radio Monte Carlo, Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. 'Ali Akbar Velayati said he and Vice President Dr. Hasan Habibi will visit Syria shortly as scheduled. He added that it is in the two countries' interest to quickly solve the problems hampering the continuation of cooperation between Damascus and Tehran.

Asked if there is a basic disagreement with Damascus posing danger to the strategic relationship between the two countries, Velayati said: Our relations with Syria—the most important Arab country in the region—are deeply rooted relations of friendship. Some differences in viewpoints will not undermine such relations. The absence of identical views between us and the Syrians on some foreign policy issues does not mean that the differences are great. On the contrary, there are still many major points of agreement. Had it not been for our cooperation with the Syrians on the question of Iraq, Iraq would have been divided and living in the unknown. In Lebanon, we both believe in the need to support the Islamic resistance in the south. The same applies to various other Arab and regional affairs.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Asked if the Syrians are planning to abandon the resistance in the south, Velayati said: According to our information, the Syrians agree with us that resistance should continue until the end of occupation. They are not currently concerned about changing their position in this regard. Asked about the Israeli pressures in this regard, Velayati said: Lebanon is an independent state and has its national legitimate interests. Consequently, its people have the right to continue their resistance as long as the Israelis are occupying their land and committing aggression against the country.

'Possibility' of Cooperation With Russia on Defense

LD3112152495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1507 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Strategic cooperation between Russia and Iran is the topic which has been chosen by the newspaper ABRAR for its political commentary column on the back page.

In this political commentary the initialing of an agreement for a 10-year cooperation between the two countries during the three-day visit of the Russian deputy premier and foreign economic relations minister [Oleg Davydov] to Tehran which will be signed during the forthcoming visit of the Russian president to Tehran has been described as positive and important, as it constitutes Moscow's negative response to the plan by the U.S. Senate to tighten trade sanctions against Iran.

ABRAR writes: Removing some misunderstandings which were caused by Western propaganda and the influence of the supporters of a pro- U.S. policy in Moscow, which prevented Russia from close cooperation with Iran, have now culminated in the efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crises in Tajikistan and Karabakh. Meanwhile, the common stances and mutual interests of Moscow and Tehran concerning regional issues such as the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf, strengthen the grounds for cooperation.

The ABRAR commentator believes that there is also a possibility of extending this cooperation to the field of defense. Undoubtedly this cooperation will defeat the U.S. strategy to expand its influence in the regions surrounding Iran and Russia.

Velayati Warns Against Partitioning Iraq

LD3112155195 Tehran IRNA in English 1503 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 31 (IRNA) — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati underlining the need to preserve territorial integrity of Iraq termed on Sunday any plan to partition Iraq as dangerous.

In a meeting with the Turkish and Syrian deputy foreign ministers, Velayati said that exchange of views between Iran, Turkey and Syria would help strengthen peace and security in the region.

According to political observers, Velayati's remarks were a response to King Husayn of Jordan who had already proposed to form a federation in Iraq comprising Kurds in the north, Sunni Muslims in central Iraq and Shiite Muslims in southern Iraq.

King Husayn had told London-based weekly, Al-WASAT, that forming a federation in Iraq would be the best way for survival of Iraq and called on Iraqi opposition to cooperate with Jordan to implement the proposal.

The Islamic Republic of Iran criticized the proposal and some other regional states including Syria, Egypt, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates rejected the plan as a Zionist design put forward by the Jordanian king.

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah has said that Kuwait is against any plan to disintegrate Iraq.

AL-ITTIHAD, the official organ of the United Arab Emirates rejected the proposal made by Jordan as a suspicious scheme.

The Ash Shariqah-based daily, AL-KHALIJ said it seemed that Jordan and King Husayn are collaborating with the U.S. and Israel in the Middle East to partition Iraq.

King Husayn's Proposal for Iraq Criticized

LD3112160495 Tehran IRNA in English 1119 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec 31 (IRNA) — the English daily KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL Sunday stressed preserving Iraq's integrity and criticized attempts by King Husayn of Jordan to partition the country.

The editorial added that the recent statement issued by political experts from Iran, Syria and Turkey in their Tehran meeting with respect to the necessity of preserving the territorial integrity of Iraq indicated their deep concern and apprehensions towards the current political and territorial sovereignty of Iraq.

"As a matter of fact, this timely reaction of Baghdad's neighbors comes amid renewed political attempts by Jordan's King Husayn to form some sort of federation in Iraq where Kurds and the two main sects of Islam (Shiite and Sunni) would constitute its three major parts."

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

"Undoubtedly the political equilibrium in the region, as well as the national borders and territorial integrity of the political entities, including those of Iraq, are unchangeable.... and past experiences have showed that those who intend to torpedo the political equations, have themselves fallen victims of their own unsuccessful attempts."

The paper said in conclusion that King Husayn had better contribute to alleviate the sufferings of the Muslim people of Iraq instead of going ahead with his policies which have failed in the past.

Radio Reports Demonstrations in Bahrain

NC3012065795 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0430 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Associated Press reported unrest around Manama and in the southwestern areas of Bahrain yesterday. According to this report, hundreds of residents of the village of Jamrah near Manama staged demonstrations yesterday in protest of the closure of two mosques. The Bahraini police used teargas and plastic bullets to disperse the demonstrators. The Bahraini officials have not stated their views on yesterday's demonstrations.

Damascus Declaration Statement Called 'Lackluster'

NC3012085695 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 30 Dec 95

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a reaction to the stance of the members of the Damascus Declaration, known as the six-plus-two group, on the Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf, our country's Foreign Ministry spokesman described it as a source of contradiction and discord which would heighten misunderstandings among Islamic countries.

The foreign ministers, who are members of the Damascus Declaration, issued a communique after their two-day session and as with the previous repetitive statements, they expressed support for the United Arab Emirates' [UAE] stance.

Our Foreign Ministry spokesman deemed this stance of the six- plus-two group an attempt to fan baseless claims and stressed the Islamic Republic of Iran's ownership of the three islands in the Persian Gulf. He declared Iran's willingness to enter into talks in order to dispel misunderstandings between Iran and the UAE within the framework of the UAE Amir's letter to our president.

During the two-day session of the foreign ministers who are members of the Damascus Declaration, various issues were assessed and finally a statement was issued on the cooperation of member countries in the political, economic, and defense fields.

The Damascus Declaration has six members who are also members of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], and the two countries of Syria and Egypt. This group, which was formed in the aftermath of the oil war in 1991, has made extensive efforts to foster coordination on various issues among the member countries, but it has not attained much success.

The political differences of the member countries, especially their heterogeneous political structures, their diverse economic interests, and their dissimilar definitions of security are among the factors which have made the six-plus-two group ineffective.

This group was formed on the basis of a division of labor which was not implemented by any of the members after the signing of the Damascus Declaration. In the defense sphere, the GCC member countries accepted that they would be the ones to finance this joint program of the six-plus-two group and Egypt and Syria pledged that they would place the necessary manpower at the disposal of the member countries.

However, the GCC member countries who were confronted by numerous financial difficulties in the aftermath of the oil war wriggled out of their pledged commitments. In addition, they were apprehensive that they would constantly be expected to provide financial assistance to Egypt and Syria within this framework. The non- implementation of the Damascus Declaration gradually made their presence lackluster, to the extent that its members mentioned its demise.

Accordingly, no premium is paid to any decisions or statements of the six-plus-two group and even the member countries view it with doubt and indifference. From this vantage point, experts consider their latest statement and their decisions regarding cooperation in various fields as an agreement solely on paper.

Paper Calls Turkish Election 'Turning Point'

NC3012195195 Tehran SALAM in Persian 26 Dec 95 p 8

[Commentary by M. Ja'fari: "A Turning Point in Turkey"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The dazzling victory of the Welfare [Refah] Party in Turkey's parliamentary elections,

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

with its deputies gaining 158 seats, can be considered a turning point in Turkey's political and cultural life.

Earlier the Welfare Party had attained a major victory in the municipal elections and had taken control of municipal affairs in Turkey's major cities. In this manner it had made enormous strides in the popularizing of Islamic culture and perceptions in Turkish society, which for more than half a century had witnessed anti-religious trends and governments.

The Welfare Party's victory does not imply swift and deep changes in the country's foreign and political relations and in view of the current situation in Turkey such expectations would seem very unlikely. However, the most important impact of this unprecedented development would be the strengthening of the political and especially cultural bases of Islamic groups and trends in Turkey. It is hoped that with the growth and flourishing of such trends in the future we will witness changes in foreign relations and a more extensive role for Muslims who believe in Islamic political and cultural values on the domestic front.

As mentioned earlier, the Welfare Party has been considered among the weaker parties in the past few decades in Turkey and not as a "revolutionary" development on Turkey's internal political scene. Instead its victory can be interpreted as a means for a more visible presence of Muslims, who have constantly been tyrannized by the ruling politicians, especially the militarists.

Accordingly, the Western governments, especially the United States, must be displeased, if not fearful, about the Welfare Party's victory. They will be forced to endure this unpleasant situation and will try to minimize its political repercussions.

It is worth mentioning that on the eve of the Turkish elections U.S. President Bill Clinton announced: The firm relations between Washington and Ankara will continue, regardless of the outcome of the parliamentary elections in Turkey.

Similarly, the European Union accepted Turkey into its Customs Union after many years, right on the eve of Turkey's elections, and approved a $2.4 billion loan. Some believe that if the West had given these privileges—which had been coveted by previous governments for years—much earlier the situation would have changed in favor of Ciller's government.

However, the realities in Turkish society indicate that the Muslim people in this country with a 500-year long cultural precedent, which is documented in their identity cards, are seeking to revive the glory of their traditional Islamic values. This development, that is, the victory of the Welfare Party, is first and foremost the victory of the Turkish people rather than of its leaders. It is also a step forward.

Commentary Views Transfer of Power in Saudi Arabia

LD0201121996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1104 GMT 2 Jan 96

[Radio commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Greetings dear listeners. Having heard the domestic and foreign news, let me draw your attention to today's commentaries.

King Fahd, the king of Saudi Arabia, has issued a decree, transferring all his powers for running the affairs of the country to Prince 'Abdallah, that country's crown prince. In his decree, King Fahd referred to Article 65 of the Saudi Arabian Constitution to make his crown prince the person in charge of government affairs. According to Article 65 of the Constitution, the king can entrust his powers to the crown prince. In the decree, the reason for this transfer of powers has been stated as being his great need to rest, having just left hospital.

Last month, King Fahd was hospitalized because of a heart condition. Although Prince 'Abdallah is recognized as the crown prince of Saudi Arabia and is considered to be Fahd's future successor, there were numerous reports — after the king was hospitalized — about rivalry between the Saudi princes. This fact aroused anxieties among Saudi officials. Anxiety about possible disruption if there was a change of leadership in Saudi Arabia and the occurrence of certain developments, such as protests against policies and an attack on the U.S. command center in Saudi Arabia, added to these anxieties.

Political analysts have interpreted the transfer of power to Prince 'Abdallah as a measure aimed at consolidating his position over other rivals. Thus, by taking power while King Fahd is alive, the crown prince can gain mastery over the situation.

Prince 'Abdallah is 72 years-old and has been the commander of the National Guard since 1962. The National Guard is a force numbering about 30,000 and is responsible for protecting Saudi Arabia's strategic centers, such as the oil fields, as well as the security of the Saudi family.

Political observers believe that the transfer of power from King Fahd, the 74 year-old king of Saudi Arabia to Prince 'Abdallah, the 72 year-old crown prince, can strengthen the position of the crown prince over his rivals but that it cannot end the rivalries in Saudi Arabia once and for all.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

UN Human Rights Resolution 'Politically Motivated'

NC2912122995 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 24 Dec 95 pp 1, 14

[Report by Kambakhsh Khalaji]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The recent resolution issued by the Third Committee of the 50th UN General Assembly on human rights situation in Iran is simply based on political considerations, far from any reality and in violation of the United Nations' normal procedure, Mohammad Javad Zarif, deputy foreign minister for international affairs, told the TEHRAN TIMES Saturday [23 December].

In an exclusive interview with the daily he said that the text of the resolution has been dictated to the committee members by the United States and the Zionist regime, adding that the Israeli regime's record of human rights is the worst one in the world.

Some articles of the resolution are based on groundless accusations such as the one referring to the murder of the Christian pastors.

The three members of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO), in an open court session attended by several foreign diplomats, reporters as well as family members of the victims, confessed that they had killed the pastors at the behest of the MKO. But the Third Committee's resolution still calls on Iran to give clarification on the murder of the pastors, Zarif said, adding, this simple example indicates that the resolution is politically motivated and influenced by the U.S. and the Zionist regime.

Indeed the recent report, contrary to the UN procedure, has not been prepared by the Special Representative of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Maurice Danby Copithorne, but by the members of the committee under the influence of the U.S. and the Zionist regime, Zarif said, adding, therefore, it has no legal basis.

Zarif added that different countries voted positive to the resolution due to pressures from the U.S. and Israel.

In his first report, former United Nations Special Representative on human rights in Iran, A. Galindo Pohl, had based some articles of his report on facts, but there were several unfounded accusations against Iran in the same report. The U.S. strongly put [a] lot of pressure on the UN Secretary General to dismiss Galindo Pohl, Zarif said. It shows that all UN reports on situation of human rights in Iran have been prepared under the U.S. pressures.

Asked about Copithorne, the new UN Representative on human rights in Iran, Zarif said, we hope the new envoy would help prepare a true picture of human rights in Iran.

Kazakh Diplomat on Trade Cooperation With Country

NC2912215395 Mashhad EQTESAD-E KHORASAN ECONOMIC WEEKLY in Persian 23 Dec 95 p 3

[Report on "exclusive" interview with Consul of the Republic of Kazakhstan "Tayerov" by unidentified KHORASAN correspondent in Mashhad; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] After Russia, Kazakhstan is the second largest republic of the former Soviet Union and now of the CIS. The broadening of relations between Iran and these countries and the lengthy common borders have provided direct links between the various provinces of our country with this region. This has resulted in a reciprocal establishment of embassies and consulates in the major cities of Iran and these republics so that bilateral relations can progress more swiftly.

The Kazakh consul in Mashhad, who had earlier been stationed in the Kazakhstan Embassy in Tehran as the economics and commercial affairs attache, has gleaned valuable experience in the field of economic relations between the two countries. Due to the importance of Khorasan's role in boosting bilateral relations he took up residence in Mashhad so that these relations can be organized further.

In an exclusive interview, which you will now read, you will be able to understand relations between Kazakhstan and Iran much better from the consul's remarks.

[Tayerov] In November 1993 the Republic of Kazakhstan's Embassy was inaugurated in Tehran. As you are aware the Iranian Embassy also opened simultaneously in Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan, and began functioning.

Relations between Kazakhstan and the Islamic Republic of Iran are in the process of broadening and currently more than four agreements have been signed. The protocol for the opening of a consulate in Mashhad was signed in 1994. This protocol envisaged the opening of two consulates, one in Mashhad and the other in Bandar-e Anzali. In Kazakhstan, two Iranian consulates have been opened in the port of (Aktaw) and in Chimkent. The Kazakhstan consulates oversee affairs pertaining to Mazandaran and Khorasan provinces.

The duties and objectives of the Kazakh consulate in Mashhad are to expand economic relations among

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

the three provinces of Khorasan, Mazandaran, and Gilan and Kazakhstan. A program for transit and transportation between Iran and Kazakhstan has been envisioned, which is of immense importance and is currently being expanded. Currently 90 percent of those who apply for visas are Iranian drivers.

The Iranian goods exported to Kazakhstan are foodstuffs, furniture, carpets, plastic products, and all other basic commodities needed by the Kazakh people.

Kazakhstan's exports to Iran consist of raw materials, meat products, iron implements, sheets, and tin.

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] Mr. Tayerov, could you please elaborate on Iran-Kazakhstan relations in the field of tourism?

[Tayerov] The two countries' relations in tourism are in the process of expanding and most of the Iranian tourists go to Kazakhstan from Tehran. [passage omitted]

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] What is the nature of the technical and engineering services provided by Iranian engineers?

[Tayerov] We welcome any investment by Iranian engineers with open arms and can place our resources at their disposal. We are willing to provide them with all kinds of assistance. Currently a special program for investment in Kazakhstan is being studied. This is the best opportunity for Iranian construction companies and engineers to participate actively in this sector. Turkey is actively involved in this sector at present. [passage omitted]

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] In order to reach Kazakhstan we are forced to transit certain other countries. Have any facilities for this been envisioned especially in the form of assistance by your country en route?

[Tayerov] An agreement has been signed among the CIS countries which stipulates that if a tourist or driver in one of the CIS countries has a visa he can cross without any checking or any other problems. He can also stay in any of these countries for 72 hours without a visa.

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] How do you view the trend of cooperation among the region's countries within the framework of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO]?

[Tayerov] Kazakhstan believes that in the future the ECO will expand extensively. As the commercial attache for two years at the Kazakhstan Embassy in Tehran I participated in the ECO sessions and observed that the issues discussed there were extremely important and crucial ones. Hence I believe that the ECO's future is brilliant.

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] The Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan railroad will soon become operational. In your opinion, what effect will this have on the economic and commercial relations of the countries of Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and all other countries?

[Tayerov] The inauguration of the Mashhad-Sarakhs-Tajan [MST] railroad is one of the most important issues for the Central Asian countries. This railroad would in fact mean the revival of the Silk Route. In ancient times, this was an important and major route. With the opening of the railroad, the new Silk Route will function in a modern way.

The inauguration of the MST railroad will link Kazakhstan and other regional countries with the warm waters of the world. We agree that with the functioning of this railroad, the economies of the central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan, will develop.

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] What are the Iranian and Kazakh traders main economic problems?

[Tayerov] Since relations between the Iranian and Kazakh traders are still in their early stages, first of all the investment by both sides should increase. A new law has been approved in Kazakhstan which stipulates that investment in the field of production and the setting up of factories should be supported since this kind of investment will be extremely lucrative. For example, investment can be made in setting up factories for the manufacture of macaroni, dairy products, meat products, and other foodstuffs, wall paper, tiles, and mosaic.

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] What was the reason for suspending the Mashhad-Almaty flights?

[Tayerov] Actually a protocol had been signed on the Tehran- Almaty flights according to which the flights began. The real reason for suspending the Mashhad-Almaty flights was that there were not enough passengers and therefore it was not very profitable to operate them. Usually there were about 10-12 persons travelling from Mashhad and 10-15 persons from Kazakhstan to Iran. Now with the opening of the Kazakhstan Consulate in Mashhad we are striving to resume the Mashhad-Almaty flights. The Kazakhstan ambassador in Tehran had suggested this, and, as you are aware, Mr. Habibi [first vice president] will review the issue when he travels to Kazakhstan.

[EQTESAD-E KHORASAN] Thank you very much.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Doha Talks Prelude To Ending 'Misunderstanding'

LD2812155495 Tehran IRNA in English 1539 GMT 28 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Dec. 28, IRNA — A senior Iranian Foreign Ministry official termed the recent talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Doha as a good prelude to putting an end to misunderstanding on 'Abu Musa Island.

Foreign Ministry director general for the Persian Gulf affairs Hossein Sadeqi in a talk to the Qatari news agency, voiced Iran's readiness to sign a non-aggression pact with the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf in a bid to create an amicable atmosphere for strengthening security and stability in the region.

Referring to "excellent" Tehran-Doha relations, he pointed to certain countries out of the region which hinder expansion of cooperation between Iran and the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf region.

Sadeqi also noted that the Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati has informed the visiting speaker of the Omani parliament 'Abdallah Bin-Ali al-Qatabi of Iran's readiness to meet UAE foreign minister either in Tehran, Muscat, Doha or any other place to discuss ways of removing the current misunderstanding.

The Qatar news ageny quoted high-ranking Iranian sources as saying that the speaker of Oman's parliament in his visit to Tehran has offered Muscat's initiative for an intermediary role between Tehran and Abu Dhabi.

'Satanic' Plans Said Behind Gulf Territorial Claims

NC2912120195 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 18 Dec 95 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Territorial Claims—The Inauspicious Legacy of Colonialism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful.

Bahrain has officially declared war against Qatar and has stressed that if Qatar does not retract its territorial claims against Bahrain, Manama would prefer to go to war.

This declaration of war came a few days after Qatar's decision to boycott the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] session at which Qatar opposed the appointment of a Saudi official as GCC secretary general. Bahrain's declaration of war against Qatar is not unrelated to recent events, which were probably incited by the Saudis.

What should be done? Perhaps some would wish to muddy the regional waters for their own benefit but this would be unwise and irresponsible. The regional countries must act responsibly and call upon those involved in this verbal battle to display restraint to prevent things from worsening and avoid the influence of the venomous insinuations of others.

War and bloodshed in the Persian Gulf is the worst possible scenario. It should be prevented at all costs. The Persian Gulf region will not benefit from a conflagration ignited by foreigners and their regional lackeys and if the littoral Persian Gulf countries are effaced by the tumultuous flames of war. The countries and responsible governments of the region—the Islamic Republic of Iran in particular—should act, calling on the sides involved to exercise restraint and safeguard the stability and security of the region.

As the largest country in the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran has a privileged position and should use its influence over the sides involved to benefit the region and prevent another war on the southern shores of the Persian Gulf.

No one should forget the bitter experience of the past. We should remember that territorial claims and efforts to revive them according to historical documentation are among the atrophied levers of the powers of world arrogance and the inauspicious legacy of the colonialist period. We should identify those who benefit from such claims and those who sustain losses, those who incite things, and those who seek to douse the flames of conflict. We must identify the friends and foes of the regional nations and separate them.

Those who are inciting the Bahraini shaykhs to declare war against Qatar are not the friends of the Bahraini people or the Bahraini shaykhs. They only wish to take revenge on the Qatari Government to vent their pent-up rage and malice.

Perhaps a serious warning must be issued to those who contemplate sedition and who have motivated Bahrain to declare war. They should be told to stay where they are and not think about plots and conflagration. They should know that if the flames of war engulfed the southern shores of the Persian Gulf, the instigators' tents would also catch fire and be reduced to ashes.

The defeat and failure of the Baghdad regime in two recent wars is a clear example. No one has forgotten Saddam's savage actions, beginning each time through shortsighted territorial claims, inflicting irreparable damage on the regional countries and nations and destroying the security and stability of the region

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Official Says Competent Candidates Should Run

NC2912120895 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 26 Dec 95 pp 1, 14

[Report by Leyla Niktalab]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—All members of the Majles (Iranian Parliament) are committed to solve people's problems and spare no efforts in this regard, said the head of Majles' Education Committee, Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Ali Akbar Musavi-Hoseyni in an exclusive interview with the TEHRAN TIMES.

Asked to comment on the participation of different parties and groups in the next parliamentary elections, Hoseyni said that the Islamic Consultative Assembly is a place for people's representatives and that all persons who enjoy legal competence, can identify the country's problems, and have the ability to resolve them, should run for the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Referring to the remarkable achievements of the previous tenures of the Majles, he pointed out some key measures taken by the parliamentarians and said that the people's representatives in the 4th Majles completely sympathize with people, understand their problems, and offer significant plans to resolve those issues.

As the head of the Education Committee, Hoseyni said that the committee is comprised of those who have devoted their lives to the educational and cultural affairs, adding that the experts on the committee work on different education-related bills and plans which are brought up in the Majles.

He further underlined some of the main activities of the committee and said that the ratification of a bill on the establishment of a provincial-regional council of education, which can remove most of the obstacles in the way of teaching and training, has been a great success for the committee. He added that the bill would be put into operation within the next five years, stressing that a group of educational experts and authorities from all Iranian provinces work in the council.

The committee's members work on the annual budget of the Ministry of Education. Meanwhile Hoseyni added, the members played a pivotal role in deciding the qualitative and quantitative objectives in the field of education in the Second Five-Year Development Plan.

In conclusion, he considered the general monitoring on elections by the Guardian Council as a key factor and ensured people that their representatives in the Majles do their best for the development of the country in cultural, social, economic and educational fields.

Jannati Comments on Upcoming Elections Criticized

NC0101123896 Tehran SALAM in Persian 17 Dec 95 p 2

[Commentary by 'Abbas 'Abdi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Jannati, Tehran's temporary Friday Imam and one of the respected members of the Council of Guardians, spoke about the elections, supervision by the Council of Guardians, and eligibilities which, to a large extent, proved right the forecasts by those who believe that no positive changes will be seen in the Majles elections and in how the rightist factions and the Council of Guardians will act in omitting candidates from the lists. In order not to remain silent on what has happened until now and on what is to happen, and in order to put forth some points for alert consciences to awaken and for those who believe in the divine law and in other laws and do not sacrifice them for political grudges, we will put forth some points which should be carefully examined and observed if found to be right.

1. The temporary and respected Friday Imam of Tehran compared the way the Council of Guardians examines eligibilities to the job of a magistrate. But first of all, obviously the duty of a magistrate is to issue sentences against or in favor of legal and actual persons; and on the basis of the sentence that is issued, either side of the case has the right to appeal. This is based on Article 57 of the Constitution which stipulates that the ruling powers are independent of each other, thus granting the judiciary branch certain powers which only it can perform. And only when the plaintiff—either individuals or the state—pleads for justice or applies to a magistrate, then on the basis of laws, a second hearing is held to examine all details and the sentence that has been issued, in which case, either side has the right to appeal and to apply to a higher court.

On this basis, the Council of Guardians' judiciary acts are contrary to the Constitution because they do not observe the principle of the division of power. They are contrary to the prevailing laws since none of the members of the said Council have been entrusted by the judiciary branch to carry out such duties. Also, they have failed to observe the country's judiciary laws, a large part of which are among the established principles of the divine law.

Secondly, in the very unlikely case that the Council of Guardians is entrusted this right, why does it not summon the persons who have been charged? Under which law does it consider an act to be a criminal offense? How does it determine what punishment should be administered? Does it also have the right to pass

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

for over a decade, paving the way for foreigners to enter Persian Gulf water.

The regional countries should not forget that by resorting to various plots and instigating by reviving territorial claims, the satanic powers seek to destroy the security and stability of the region to pave the way for political and foreign interference. Everyone knows that numerous overt and covert hands are seeking to keep the GCC members occupied so that they can pillage their oil resources.

Today there are at least 20 cases of territorial claims among the GCC members and the filthy hands of colonialism have even instigated the United Arab Emirates [UAE] to propound territorial claims against Iran. The intelligent and vigilant faction in the UAE's ruling party has not been greatly affected by the foreigners' insinuations. But the diabolical and despicable plans of the foreigners' lackeys should not be ignored; the provocation continues even now.

The era of the revival of ancient territorial claims in the region has ended. Hands should join to upgrade cooperation among the Persian Gulf neighboring countries.

Iran, as the largest country in the region, has a very heavy responsibility and should get involved. It should use its influence to talk to the conflicting sides to prevent Bahrain and Qatar from repeating the bitter experiences of Iraq and the UAE in the region and drowning in the same vortex as them. They should not squander the opportunities for growth and economic and cultural development.

Commentary Views U.S. Aid to Egypt

LD2812213495 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 28 Dec 95

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A member of the U.S. budget commission and foreign affairs [as heard], at the end of his meeting with the Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, announced: U.S. aid to Egypt, despite a slash in America's budget and federal expenditures, remaining at their present level — which is $2.1 billion — the U.S. Government will still be committed to Egypt.

Since the Camp David accord, which Egypt signed with the Zionist regime in 1979, the country receives considerable financial aid from the U.S. each year and it is the second recipient of U.S. aid after the Zionist regime. Though Egypt had been upbeat that after such aid it will be able to boost its economy, after the lapse of 16 years since the Camp David accord, not only such an expectation proved to be nothing but wishful thinking, but the economy is undergoing change for the worse and not for the better. An ever- increasing hike in the unemployment rate of the country and economic inflation are among the economic problems which Egypt is grappling with.

Political experts maintain the reason as to why the country's economy has remained stagnant, if not slowed down, should be sought in the nature of U.S. financial aids to that country. It is now obvious that U.S. aids to impoverished countries, among them Egypt, are granted in the form of military assistance, or as said, in the form of sedatives, meaning that they merely allay problems on a short-term basis. Therefore U.S. aids to Egypt are not pumped in infrastructural, such as dam construction, projects. Such aids are merely aimed at covering the nation's basic needs. Hence U.S. financial aids to Egypt failed to do the country's economy any good and rather, through eroding that country's indigenous economy, they make Egypt more and more dependent on foreign aid, especially America's financial assistance.

Though Egypt's economy is not comparable to that of the Zionist regime, what is worthy of attention is that U.S. aids to the Zionist regime are granted with the intention of creating the Zionist infrastructural projects while its aid to poor nations has devastating results in the long run.

At any rate, in light of Egypt's active role in enhancing the Middle East peace process, it seems that the West, especially the U.S., tries to make that country more and more dependent on itself in order to make the most of that country and pursue its political ideals in the region as throughout the Arab world.

Majles Election Campaign To Start 29 Feb

LD0301111296 Tehran IRNA in English 1026 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Saman, Jan 3 (IRNA) — The election campaign for the 5th Majles Elections will start February 29, said an official with the Governor General's Office of Saman Province Wednesday.

He told IRNA that the one-week campaign will end 24 hours before the nation-wide elections.

According to the official, the eligible nominees will have one week to register their nomination with the local authorities for evaluation and approval.

Elections for the 270-seat majles is scheduled for March 8.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

sentences such as imprisonment, lashings, execution, the confiscation of property, and so on? Why do those who disregard the most obvious principles of the divine law doubt the eligibility of a large number of people whom they accuse of bribery but fail to summon to court? Why have they not said anything about the bribery charges brought against these people until now? If they were involved in bribery, they should be convicted by a competent court and not become the target of vague allusions. Assuming that some people do believe that these people were involved in bribery, will they not wonder why the judiciary has not arrested and tried them? Is this not self- destructive?

Thirdly, have the members of the Council of Guardians accepted the idea of collective judgment? If the Council of Guardians considers its authorities to be the same as a magistrate's, this is against the law; and if it issues a collective sentence, this too is contrary to their own views which consider collective judgment to be in contrast with the divine law.

2. It may be said that the Council of Guardians does not deal with violations or accusations unless it is ordered by a competent court to do so and that it only offers personal opinions. In this case, it should be said that it is the duty of the officials to put forth a precise framework of what is legal and what is not and to publish this in the mass media for the public so that all those who want to will conform with these and all those who do not want to will be operating outside the framework of the law. The Council of Guardians' major problem is the velayat-e faqih [supreme jurisconsult]—which it should interpret on the basis of the prevailing laws. If this is done, then it will not be necessary for Mr. Jannati to say that all those who consider themselves not to be eligible should not apply, since naturally all those who do not accept the interpretation that is put forth [by the Council of Guardians] will withdraw, in which case the call by others for them to participate in the elections will be meaningless.

3. The most interesting point in Mr. Jannati's remarks was when he said: Being rejected in the past does not necessarily mean that they [the applicants] will be turned down again and should, therefore, not register their names. If these people prove their practical commitment to Islam, their eligibility will be endorsed.

Apparently this implies that all those who were previously rejected lacked a practical commitment to Islam; and this is a new charge against some of those people. What these remarks mean is that all those whose eligibility was rejected were those who lacked a practical commitment to Islam; and this is nothing but a blatant insult.

Paper Cites Raja'i-Khorasani on Elections

NC3012143695 Tehran ABRAR in Persian
24 Dec 95 p 1

[From the News Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tehran deputy in the Islamic Majles announced: I will form a political party in order to strengthen the country's political system.

Dr. Sa'id Raja'i-Khorasani, who is a member of the Majles' Foreign Policy Committee stated: The formation of this party does not mean branching out against any particular faction.

He rebutted the attributing of the concept of segregation of politics and religion to the technocrats [preceding word in English] and added: It is possible that there are some persons who are in favor of separating religion from politics, but such individuals are present everywhere.

Elaborating on his remarks, he said: The technocrats are expert and specialized Muslim individuals who believe in the Islamic Republic of Iran's system and it is possible that they may be present in every faction. It is a blatant error to project these individuals as an independent political faction with a specific ideology.

The Tehran Majles deputy said that the expertise and specialization will be greater in the fifth Majles than it was in the past and asserted: An appraisal of the previous rounds of Majles elections indicates that the people's inclination for expert and specialist forces to enter the Majles is much higher than it was in the previous terms.

Raja'i-Khorasan said: The stances of independent individuals are different from those of the other two factions, whatever the case may be. However, their main opinions are in harmony with those of the other two factions, namely the Tehran Militant Clergy Association and the Tehran Militant Clerics Society, with regard to their commitment to the Velayat-e Faqih [rule of the supreme jurisconsult] and the Constitution, and support for President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's government.

The member of the Majles' Foreign Policy committee who was speaking to the IRNA correspondent referred to the Tehran Militant Clerics Society's present situation and said: This faction's insistence on its own distinctive stances is the reason that its voice is not as forceful as before. However, it appears that currently its members have revamped some of their analyses, especially on the subject of foreign relations.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Deputy Announces 'Independent' Islamic Party

NC3012150995 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 24 Dec 95 p 1

[From the News Desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Shiraz deputy of the Islamic Majles has announced: An independent party named "Mardom-e Iran" [The People of Iran] will be formed before the fifth Majles elections.

Qasem Sholeh-Sa'di, a member of the Majles Foreign Policy committee, said in an interview with ABRAR's parliamentary correspondent: There is no political party in the Islamic system. Therefore, just before the fifth round of Majles elections, a third independent group, which has become known in some circles as the "moderate" or "technical" group, is seeking to form an Islamic party that will not be affiliated with either of the two main factions in the majority and minority in the Majles.

He added: Of course, we have not made any final assessment, but we intend to form this party all over the country, having been inspired by public opinion. We have some candidates who will be nominated shortly.

The Shiraz Majles deputy explained that most of the country's high-level officials and the people have realized the need for a political party. He said: The reason for not discussing this issue earlier is that there was likely to be opposition to the concept of an independent faction by some circles. Thus we considered it expedient not to mention the issue until closer to the elections. Now that the country's officials and the people agree on the need to form a faction, we decided to take steps to form an independent party to be called "Mardom-e Iran" with our own members for the present. There are 100 of them.

The member of the Foreign Policy committee of the Islamic Majles stressed: Now that the preliminaries have been completed and in view of the fact that neither we nor the law requires any license or registration we will take steps to enroll members in accordance with the rules and regulations.

Sholeh-Sa'di announced the conditions for membership in the Mardom-e Iran Party as: Commitment to Islam and the absoluteness of the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme jurisconsult], adherence to the Constitution, having a specialization and experience in at least one field, favoring freedom and action for defense of individual and collective rights.

He added: In Islamic Iran, there is freedom in all areas but there is no Islamic political party. The party that we are seeking to establish will be the instrument of a democracy within an Islamic system. Just as his holiness Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) had stated: "Be free and noble," the free and noble ones will naturally be members of our party.

He predicted: In the fifth Majles, a number of the majority party's seats will fall to the independent group and the minority will grow somewhat and gain more seats.

The Shiraz Majles deputy recalled: The time is now favorable for the majority and minority parties to officially recognize a third (independent) faction.

Pakistan

Senate Committee Views Possible Indian Nuclear Test

BK0301040496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 0300 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs at its meeting in Islmabad yesterday reviewed the situation arising from the possibility of Indian nuclear test. The committee called upon the international community to get India realize that if it went ahead with another nuclear test, it would have grave and far-reaching implications for peace and security in the world. It said that it will aggravate the situation to such an extent that the possibility of a nuclear confrontation in the region could not be ruled out.

Bhutto Announces Reward for Arrest of 'Terrorist'

BK0201150796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto inaugurated the women's police station in Larkana today. Speaking on the occasion, she said that the present government is striving hard to ensure all rights to women in accordance with tenets of Islam.

Referring to Karachi situation, the prime minister said that the police and the Rangers have been striving for restoration of peace in Karachi and members of law enforcing agencies are even sacrificing their lives for this purpose. She said only yesterday the terrorists killed 10 people in two incidents. In one incident, two army captains, a Ranger, and a policeman were stopped and tortured to death. The police in an encounter yesterday killed Altaf Group's terrorist Suleman, who was involved in this crime. She said the Sindh Government would give reward money of 50 lakh rupees to one providing information leading to arrest or elimination of Nayeem Sharri, chief of Altaf Group's terrorist gang. Ms. Benazir Bhutto said that like other countries, we in

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Pakistan would also announce reward money for catching criminals so that they could be taken to courts and punished.

Ms. Benazir Bhutto said that we have set up a national consultative committee for giving political representation to women and for the elimination of excesses against them. The prime minister said that they had invited the opposition for dialogue on restoration of women's reserved seats [in Parliament]. She said we have signed United Nations convention on elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and thus taken a step for the rights of women at international level. She said we want to see better relationship between police and the people and pointed out that the police is active in evolving better relationship with the people.

Indian 'Harassment' of Kashmiri Leaders Seen

BK0201134096 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has expressed deep concern at the continuing harassment of the leaders of the freedom movement by Indian occupation forces and their agents. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad it is evident that having failed to crush the morale and spirit of the people of Kashmir, Indian occupation forces are resorting to intimidation tactics of the worst kind against political leaders and their families. He was commenting on attacks on Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Gilani.

'Dreaded Terrorist' Arrested in Karachi

BK3012084995 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mast Gul, a dreaded terrorist and a leader of Pakistan-backed Hizbul Mujahideen, was arrested in Karachi. He was the main accused in the Charar Sharif incident in the Kashmir Valley in May this year when the militants burned down the holy shrine. He later escaped to Pakistan.

Further on Arrest

BK3012105895 Islamabad THE NATION in English 30 Dec 95 p 1

[Report by THE NATION correspondent in Karachi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi — Major Mast Gul, hero of Charar Sharif and a prominent Kashmiri freedom-fighter was arrested on Friday evening from the headquarter of Jamaat-i-Islami office in Karachi. He will be sent to Lahore under tight security of law enforcement agencies.

Later, Major Mast Gul was sent to Lahore under tight security. He was not sent through scheduled flight but through another flight. According to officials the decision to expel Mast Gul from Sindh was taken on the orders of a top personality of Federal Government.

The Government of Sindh has termed the activities of Mast Gul as detrimental to law and order situation of Karachi and due to this reason, orders have been issued for his expulsion from Sindh. Heavy contingent of police force raided the office of Jamaat-i-Islami cordoned of the whole area and arrested Major Mast Gul. He was taken to CIA [Criminal Investigation Agency] Centre Saddar from where he will be sent to Lahore under tight security.

On this occasion, Mast Gul said he could resist his arrest but he wants to abide by the law. He further said that he has lot of respect for the people and the laws of Pakistan.

At the time of his arrest, the workers of Jama at-i-Islami raised slogans like "Kashmir Baney Ga Pakistan" [Kashmir will be Pakistan], "Zabardast Zabardast [Mighty] Mast Gul".

India's RAW Suspected of Arming Bangladeshi Separatists

BK3012140195 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Dec 95 p 9

[Report by THE NEWS correspondent]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad: Arms drops in West Bengal are believed to be meant for separatist Chakma rebels in Bangladesh's south eastern Chittagong hills tracts, who are openly supported by Indian intelligence agency, Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), it is reliably learnt.

It has been suspected that the arms found in Puruliya might have been carried by an Indian aircraft bound for the north-eastern region. It was further believed that the aircraft belonged to RAW and these arms were actually meant to be supplied to Chakma tribes for use before the general elections scheduled for February 3 in Bangladesh.

RAW has been instigating and fanning disturbances in various educational institutions, through supply of arms, subversive literature and funds there. The incident of firing at Mymen Singh Agriculture University is one of the recent examples.

Indian agency showers favours on such elements irrespective of their specific affiliation, the sole aim being to create chaos, and punish Bangladesh for towing an independent foreign policy.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Recently Bangladesh police seized 7,000 home-made bombs, 10 Kgs of gun-powder and other explosives in the town of Savar. They also seized 378 guns and 883 bombs from else where in Bangladesh. In addition, they arrested 3,540 suspected "terrorists and criminals." It is generally believed that these elements are being supplied with arms and ammunition by RAW to destabilize Bangladesh politically and weaken economically.

The ongoing protest campaign of the Awami League led by opposition against Begum Khalida Zia and its call for "wheel jam" strike on December 30 and a 48-hour strike from January 3 is being actively supported and funded by RAW.

In the garb of formation of an "impartial" caretaker government to conduct the general elections, RAW aims at perpetuating turmoil in Bangladesh.

The Indian agency is also using a front organisation, Arakan Independence Army (AIA), and has given long-range wireless sets to it, installed them in its camp near Coaxes Bazar coast, which is used for passage of regular information and sponsoring various subversive and insurgent activities through pro-Indian lobby in Bangladesh. The control station is located in Tripura state while the Indian High Commission in Dhaka is also actively involved in the game.

It seems to be an old Indian tactic to pressurise Bangladesh to submission right from its inception. Bangladesh has been targeted by various Indian covert operations to subvert its national cohesion and solidarity. RAW has constantly been working to subvert its key institutions including the armed forces, labor unions, student organizations and political parties.

A Calcutta-based Newspaper, Ananda Bazar Patrika recently disclosed that RAW had penetrated the Bangladeshi intelligence agencies as well. RAW seems to have been directed to weaken Bangladesh internally, isolate it internationally, sever its relations with Pakistan, and establish India's total hegemonic control over it.

Even lately, Indian agencies have been endeavouring to penetrate the religious scholarship of Bangladesh to use it for its own motivated interests.

The present Bangladesh government is being subjected to a variety of political and economic pressures like the Ganges water dispute, granting of transit facilities to India, the issue of Bangladeshi immigrants etc. India is fanning insurgences, incessant firing by the BSF [Border Security Force] along the Indo-Bangladesh border, mostly on flimsy pretexts, and constantly establishing its alleged links with the ISI [Inter-Service Intelligence] in order to keep Bangladesh under its thumb and achieve what it could not despite its open aggression to dismember Pakistan in 1971.

Right from the beginning, it has been Indian effort to install pro-India governments in Bangladesh. Starting from Sheikh Mujibur Rehman till today, the Indian leadership and RAW, have been eliminating or deposing the Bangladesh executives, the moment they started initiating independent and pro-Pakistan policies. The tragic end of the former Bangladeshi president Ziaur Rehman was also planned and ruthlessly conducted by RAW. India's nefarious designs against Bangladesh remain no secret now and it would continue to be victimised on one pretext or the other.

According to Indian authorities, three parachute-loads of arms were dropped near Puruliya in West Bengal from a Hong Kong- registered AN-26 transport plane, which was force-landed at Bombay. They say five Latvians and a Briton aboard the Russian-made aircraft had confessed to dropping the weapons over West Bengal.

After the incident the Indian authorities, as usual, accused Bangladesh of supplying these weapons to the insurgents in its north east region in collaboration with ISI. It involved the Aranda Marg group, banned 23 years ago, for conniving in this matter. The group strongly denies its alleged involvement.

The Indian authorities have also stalked or grounded four planes from Oman, China and Russia since the AN-26 was forced down in Bombay. The Indian version of throwing the blame on Bangladesh and later on Pakistan seems a deliberate RAW machination to cover up its bungled up operation.

Linking Bangladesh with para-dropping of sophisticated arms in Puruliya, has raised curious concern in Dhaka, as well. Bangladesh has rejected the accusation as baseless and malicious only aimed at further pressurising and destablilising it.

More on Spokesman's Foreign Policy Briefing

BK3012115995 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 29 Dec 95 p 1,9

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad: Pakistan has rejected the Indian allegation that its security agency was involved in mysterious air-dropping of sophisticated arms in West Bengal for terrorist activities.

"Pakistan takes serious note of unwarranted and unfounded insinuations made with malicious intent and ulterior motive," the Foreign Office spokesman said at the weekly news briefing Thursday.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

He said Pakistan fully respects the sovereignty of every independent state, and there is no question of its involvement in such activities as it has no aggressive designs against India.

Indian Home Minister SB Chavan had alleged Wednesday that the "indicator of suspicion has pointed toward Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)."

Pointing out that similar statements accusing Pakistan of interference in India's internal affairs have been made by other Indian leaders from time to time, the spokesman said the mind-set of these leaders who appear to propagate war and tension shows that hawks are flying high in India.

The Pakistan government, he said, believes that such unfounded charges are nothing but a familiar Indian ploy to try to find an external scapegoat for India's domestic problems. "It has become the knee-jerk reaction of the Indian leadership to blame Pakistan for their ills."

Talking about the arms dumping controversy, he said there were some differences of opinion among neutral observers, but the whole thing is quite confused as there are lots of speculation in the Indian press. "Pakistan is constantly engaged in checking flights which overfly it,." he said. He did not know whether the planes carrying arms landed in and took off from Karachi, but said, "We are checking it." He said the Indian allegations were premature as these had been leveled before investigating the matter fully.

The spokesman told a questioner that the expulsion of the Peshawar based Afghan consul general was independent of the gory bomb blast in the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] capital.

Asked about the Russian Foreign Minister's visit to Pakistan and Afghanistan, he said Pakistan would be happy to welcome him whenever he chooses to come to Islamabad as he belongs to a great friendly country. He said Pakistan was prepared to use its good offices for the release of the crew members of a Russian plane held by the Taleban.

The spokesman said Pakistan and Russia enjoy elaborate relations, which have undergone change for the better after the end of the Cold War. "There will be a lot to talk about for peace and stability in the region during the Foreign Minister's visit."

The spokesman said the exchange of lists of nuclear facilities by Pakistan and India was the continuation of an agreement between the two countries. "We have means to find how correct the Indian list is," he said adding that it was not for him to cross-check it.

About the upcoming visit of two US senators, he said Pakistan welcomes America's mediatory role in resolving the Kashmir dispute, but "our problem has always been that the other party (India) does not welcome the third-party mediation."

Answering a question, he said the stay of the French NGO [Nongovernmental Organization], Madera, in Pakistan has been extended for another three months on its request. He said Western countries share Pakistan's concern about terrorism and undesirable activities of certain foreign NGOs. "However, we and these countries are supportive of the good work done by some NGOs. We both are trying to find a common ground as the objectives are the same."

To another question, the spokesman said the forthcoming visit of the US Commerce Secretary to Pakistan was the continuation of his previous trip. It will also build up the changed relationship between the two countries after the passage of the Brown Amendment.

The spokesman told a questioner that Pakistan was obtaining information from its embassy in Manila about the arrest of some Pakistanis in the Philippines.

Criticism of Police Work on Peshawar Bombing Reported

BK3112131895 Islamabad KHABRAIN in Urdu 31 Dec 95 p 3,6

[Report from KHABRAIN's reporting desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] Peshawar — It has been learned that the alleged Afghan terrorist, whose photo sketch is being publicized by the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] Police in connection with the recent bomb blast in Peshawar, was killed 10 years ago during the jihad. The father of the alleged culprit, 'Abdol Mateen, revealed this at the office of a local English-language newspaper.

It is being said that the police pulled this stunt to grab the reward money, which is 10 million rupees. A person who resembles the photo sketch is already being held in police custody, and the police plan to receive the reward by announcing his arrest. It has also been learned that the color of the car used in the blast was not brown but white. The roof top of that car was found under shops under construction near the Pakistan Auto Store, and the police had taken it into evidence one day after the blast.

Many eyewitnesses to the blast say that the car was white. It is also being said that the police showed the whole engine of the car on television; the wheel of the actual car had melted and was still lying in the GPO [General Post Office] as of Saturday.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Local shopkeepers are of the opinion that the purpose behind the whole campaign about the terrorist, the vehicle, and the printing of huge advertisements in the newspapers is simply to cover up the police's own inefficiency and to grab the 10 million rupees by apprehending any innocent person.

Local shopkeepers say that if the police had caught a terrorist in Qissa Khawani Bazar, recovered a bomb in his possession, and also had arrested some other persons as the police also claim, then why are speedy trials not being undertaken by the special courts, why are these culprits not being hanged publicly, and why are these culprits not being used to catch the terrorists responsible for the Peshawar bomb blast?

MYC Leader: Strike Move To Change Government

BK3012122195 Islamabad THE NATION in English 30 Dec 95 pp 1, 11

[Report from THE NATION correspondent in Lahore]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — Amir Jamaat-i-Islami [JI] and central leader of Milli Yakjehti Council (MYC), Qazi Hussain Ahmad foreseeing a complete country-wide wheel jam strike on Saturday (today) has described it an indirect move to change the present government which has completely 'lost confidence of the masses owing to its policies'.

Addressing a Press conference here on Friday, Qazi expressed his satisfaction with the protest day observed on Friday and announced that on January 5 (Friday next) the masses would again observe a protest day. "This is the starting point of an Islamic revolution marking popular awakening.

He said the time has gone to effect change through the parliament now it is the time to bring change through public pressure.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad was hopeful about a successful wheel-jam strike asserting that all the parties minus PPP [Pakistan People's Party] have pledged their support to the strike and no opposition has been shown by the MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] as well in this regard. The local transporters, he said, would also join them today (Saturday).

To a question about PML(N) [Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz], the JI Amir said they have a 'ceasefire with Nawaz Sharif to which the Jamaat would respect'. When asked about dialogue with the government Qazi said on what grounds they could hold talks with a government which was responsible for disseminating obscenity in the society.

When questioned about the wheel jam programme Qazi Hussain Ahmad said that the City has been divided into 18 sectors and the JI workers during the time of strike, would not resort to any unlawful or unconstitutional action. About the announcement made by certain MYC workers to jam wheel through gun, he however, described it just their Islamic spirit otherwise no such action would be allowed to be taken.

He said their workers would march on the roads in the shape of groups.

Qazi Hussain Ahmad resented the raid made by the authorities at Idara Noore Haq, the Central Office of Jamaat in Karachi in the wee hours of Friday. He said the authorities used armoured cars in the raid and ransacked the office under the pretext of arresting Mast Gul. The Amir termed this move a sheer frustration of this government which according to him, is pursuing the course of violence.

Strike Call 'Flop'

BK3112085995 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The wheel-jam strike call of Milli Yakjehti Council [Islamic Solidarity Council] across the country proved a flop. The call could not keep the people away from their day-to-day functions. In all the major cities, traffic plied smoothly. Public transport commuted on their normal routes. During early hours, some people were apprehensive of violence in commercial areas, therefore they opened their business houses slightly late, but complete normalcy returned before noon.

In Rawalpindi and Islamabad, public and private transport operated on all the main routes. The main shopping centers transacted business as usual. In Lahore, there was a lukewarm response to the strike call. In the main shopping centers and bazaars, business was continuing as usual, but at some places the shutters were down. PTV correspondents from various cities of Punjab quoted people as saying that they are not interested in strikes and want normal activities to continue in the greater interest of the country.

In Karachi, shopkeepers said if they were to decide, they would never heed to such calls; but they said they had to protect their business. Quite a number of private vehicles were also seen plying on roads in almost all districts of Karachi. It was a similar story in Peshawar as well. People ignored the strike and life remained normal in various parts of the NWFP [North-West Frontier Province]. And in Quetta as well, traffic plied normally. Buses, rickshas, trucks, cars, and other vehicles were

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

on the roads since morning. The main commercial areas remained open. Citizens continued their day-to-day shopping and normal commercial activities.

MQM Senators Accuse Bhutto of Genocide

BK3112074795 Karachi AMN in Urdu 16 Dec 95 pp 1,7

[Report by the AMN News bureau]

[FBIS Translated Text] Karachi, 15 Dec — Senators Ishtiyaq Azhar, Aftab Sheikh Advocate, and Mrs. Nasreen Jalil, members of the Muhajir Qaumi Movement [MQM]-Haq Parast group, have described Prime Minister Benazir Zardari's interview published in the Sindhi daily AWAMI AWAZ as highly provocative, saying that the interview reflects the prime minister's rustic and racist thinking. In a joint statement, they said that Benazir Zardari displayed her racist thinking during the previous government by raising a hue and cry over the lack of representation of Sindhis at the national level. Her latest statement, however, has proved that she is not a leader of national standing, but a representative of the rural Sindh only.

The senators said that the prime minister claimed in her interview that she does not want to crush Altaf Hussain, but the whole world knows—even foreign countries are openly saying it—that the Pakistan People's Party [PPP] government is using the worst kind of state force against the MQM. The government is subjecting movement leader Altaf Hussain's brother-in-law to torture and violence at the Adiala jail, while his elder brother and nephew were arrested and later murdered. The houses of all of Altaf Hussain's brothers and sisters are being continuously raided, and several false court cases have been registered against Altaf Hussain himself as a part of the government's political vendetta. Despite all of this, the prime minister insolently claims that she does not want to crush Altaf Hussain.

We ask the prime minister what can be regarded as an act of "crushing" someone if even these incidents of oppression and tyranny are not called "crushing." The prime minister's statement that she wants to end the game of bullets and brawling is really heartening, because the MQM has also been trying for several years to convince her that it is not good to play such a game. The prime minister, however, is not ready to understand this fact herself and has been playing a game of fire and blood with 2.2 million Muhajirs.

The senators said the prime minister should have listened to her own 23 May speech in Kasur before making this claim, a speech in which she hurled abuses at the entire Muhajir nation by describing the Muhajirs as rats, cowards, and people having bad blood. As far as the politics of bullets is concerned, the prime minister should come out of her palace, regain her senses by shaking off her pride of power, and study the reports and statements issued by human rights organizations and the foreign ministries of foreign countries the world over, which openly say that the Pakistani Government is indulging in gross violations of human rights and is committing genocide against the Muhajirs.

The MQM-Haq Parast senators said that the prime minister cannot belie these facts with her claims; nor can she deceive the world, because everyone knows that it is the PPP government and its agencies, not the MQM, which are giving dead bodies as a gift to the people of Karachi. The prime minister's much-vaunted Karachi package is nothing but a farce. It is, in fact, a package for the genocide of the Muhajirs, a package to enslave the Muhajirs and to treat them worse than vanquished nations.

The MQM-Haq Parast senators said that the prime minister's ruthlessness and hard-heartedness has reached a point where she blames the MQM for the tragic martyrdom of Altaf Hussain's brother and nephew — Nasir Hussain and Arif Hussain — whereas all leads point to the fact that they were murdered by the PPP government and the president. The prime minister, the interior minister, the governor, and the chief minister of Sindh were involved in this murder. They said that such things do not happen in civilized and noble families.

The entire world knows, however, about the prime minister herself, that she committed acts of violence against her brother and mother because of her lust for power, she ordered the police to open fire at the ancestral house of her father, and she sent her brother- in-law to jail.

The MQM-Haq Parast senators said that they are aggrieved at the prime minister's statement that the MQM did not report the disappearance of Nasir Hussain and Arif Hussain to the police for three days. This statement reflects the prime minister's shallow knowledge and superficial intelligence because these two persons were not missing. Rather, they were arrested in a raid by police personnel, the Rangers, and other agencies that had come in armored personnel carriers and other vehicles. Perhaps the prime minister does not know that the disappearance of arrested persons is not reported to the police. Rather, the affected people contact the government, the administration, and the courts to seek their release. That is what the MQM did. They said that the murderers of martyrs Nasir Hussain and Arif Hussain are known, but the police are not registering a case against them. Neither is the case being investigated. The tears of hundreds of thousands of bereaved people, how-

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

ever, have sent an appeal to Almighty God, who will issue his verdict very soon.

The senators also said that the prime minister claims that she wants to work for the development of Karachi, but the repeated strike calls are causing economic losses to the citizens of Karachi. The fact, however, is that her own government is turning Karachi into ruins. The funds allocated for the city are being spent on development works in the interior areas of Sindh, and the people of Karachi are given only dead bodies as a gift. Whenever any protest demonstration is staged against racialism, the government starts hoarse crying about the economic losses, but it does not desist from committing genocide. This clearly shows that the government itself is leading Karachi to ruination.

The prime minister has asked the residents of Karachi to identify the criminals and has assured them that their names will be kept secret if they do so. We have identified the culprits of the murderers of Altaf Hussain's brother and nephew. Now can the prime minister take any visible action against them?

The senators said the prime minister claims that the people of Karachi have faith in her, and they consider her as their sister. The fact is, however, that she was not able to visit Korangi the other day because of fear. She considers it unsafe to come to Karachi without being escorted by thousands of security guards. If she thinks that the people of Karachi consider her their sister, then it is her wishful thinking, because the Karachi residents do not regard her as their sister but as the murderer of their young men and children.

She has destroyed thousands of Muhajir families, has deprived thousands of elderly people of their breadwinners, snatched thousands of sons from their mothers, turned thousands of happy wives into widows, and separated thousands of brothers from their sisters. If these are the misdeeds of a self-proclaimed "sister," then she should be called a witch and not a sister. The prime minister should, however, remember that no tyrant can escape the wrath of God. She and her conspiring cohorts, whose hands are stained with the blood of innocent Muhajirs, will not be able to sleep in peace forever, and God will surely punish them.

Sri Lanka

President Delivers New Year's Message

BK0101114896 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 1 Jan 96

["Text" of New Year's message by President Chandrika Kumaratunga on 31 December; place not given—received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A journey of one thousand miles begins with one step, they say.

We succeeded in taking not only the first step of the long and difficult "journey" towards peace and prosperity, but several other steps as well during the year gone by.

We have already been able to achieve a series of successes during this journey.

Singular among our achievements is our success in building a society where democracy and freedom reign supreme. The step taken by us to democratise the body politic and ensure human rights and freedoms have come in for praise from the international community.

We could create an atmosphere where the people could enjoy their democratic freedoms despite the ongoing cruel war.

Bribery and corruption were so commonplace then, people were inclined to look on the twin-evil as part of the system. Today every right thinking person in the country can feel happy that we have established the necessary legal and institutional frameworks to remove this cancer in the body politic. There is no longer the opportunity for a self-seeking handful to plunder the assets of our nation.

We are aware that the quality of living of the people can improve when there is no room for bribery and corruption, and the country's ongoing development is aimed at the benefit of the masses and not the government high ups. The fact that we have ensured an equitable distribution of national resources would be a contributory factor.

What is essential for achieving these goals is political will of the government leadership backed by popular support. I wish to say that our determination to achieve these goals remains unshaken and undiminished.

Last year we took steps to change an economy that was fashioned to help kith and kin of those in power to amass wealth at the expense of the masses. That is why we could record a growth in the economy even in a war situation. We have succeeded in sustaining the economic growth, reducing the inflation and reducing the budget deficit to a margin narrower than those in "no-war"

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

years despite an all time high military expenditure. Meanwhile, large scale industries are being set up with local and foreign investment.

Forty two State enterprises destroyed by so called peoplisation have already been rehabilitated and these enterprises are now being transformed in a way beneficial to the country. A reconstruction program aimed at placing the other State enterprises on a viable footing with the collaboration of local and foreign entrepreneurs is underway. As a result, there will be a strong foundation for a vibrant economy capable of stepping up local production which will eventually eliminate unemployment and poverty in this country.

We have now come on to the correct path. What is needed is to march forward along this path.

Last year our government successfully started the difficult task of finding a lasting solution to the cruel war. We launched the battle for peace by introducing the devolution proposals for finding a political solution to the problems of Tamils on the one hand and declaring war against the militants who opposed peace and unleashed war on the whole country by oppressing the people of the North East by terror on the other.

It is not a secret that the previous regime had created a bad image of the people of Sri Lanka before the international community as a group of barbaric killers by messing up this whole problem through harassment of Tamils at one stage and providing money and armaments to terrorist groups at another.

Thorough a correct, straight forward and sincere policy and program of action our government has been able to clear the bad Sri Lankan image and enable the people to live an honourable life holding their heads up among other people in the world.

Through such action we have also gained honour and respect and reaped economic benefits.

Development means an important and essential stage where the entire country is being steered to future progress and prosperity.

For this stage to be successful we have to build a powerful economic base. In this we have to step up local production and create more employment.

Peace is an essential prerequisite for the success of this endeavour.

If we are to stabilise peace, the democratic freedoms and human rights won by the people of the South through the last general and presidential elections should be extended to the entire Tamil community led by the people in the North.

Peace can only be achieved through programs that ensure justice, fairplay, equality to all sections of the people and safeguarding their identity.

It is on the basis of such a program that we could build real natural and religious unity.

The fact that people in the North had undergone untold suffering due to 13 years of war needs no repetition.

I have clearly understood the suffering they are undergoing even today. We are aware of the difficult lives the people of Jaffna are leading today away from their usual homes and villages.

This situation should be changed forthwith. We are now taking all necessary steps to enable the people of Jaffna to return to their homes and lead normal lives.

The government is prepared to give them all the necessary protection. The land and other properties of the Tamil people are there intact. Civil administration is now coming into place.

The government does not need to perpetuate an army administration in Jaffna. Our sole intention is to establish a democratic civil administration there and hand over its administration to the Tamil people.

We earnestly hope that we would be able to lay the foundation for a new era by Thaipongal. If the military victory is to be turned to a victory of the people, it should be transformed into a victory that will be entrenched in the whole socio-political structure. To this end, we aim to implement a political solution.

But this cannot be done only by the government. Tamil people have an important role to play in extricating themselves from the unfortunate situation they face. The Tamil people can discharge this responsibility by exhorting the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] to abandon violence and enter the peaceful path.

The Government has begun the journey of stepping into the 21st century as a strong nation, by freeing the minds of people from fear and suspicion, establishing a political framework that negates violent tendencies, leaving no room for waste and corruption, directing a distorted and run-down economy on the right track for the benefit of the masses and taking steps to end the cruel war-all within one year.

Let us resolve to reinforce the supremacy of the people by establishing peace and harmony through social justice, economic development through honest and straightforward rule, democracy through freedom for the masses and the truth through banishing falsehoods.

The year 1996 is not just another new year. It is one of the few remaining years that will take us closer to the

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

21st century. We consider 1996 as a foundation year which would prepare the people for the 21st century. Our government has the determination as well as the strength to achieve this goal.

The victorious fulfilment of our objectives will not be far away if the people of Sri Lanka place their utmost confidence in us in the days to come, as they did in the past.

I wish that the black clouds of war would disappear and rays of peace, national harmony, equality and freedom would shine in the new year.

A happy new year to all.

LTTE Dispatch Confirms Offer of Foreign-Brokered Talks

BK0301114496 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 31 Dec 95

["Compilation of telephone messages of the LTTE"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] extend their new year greetings to all the displaced people of Tamil Eelam. Let us take a pledge that we will make sincere and enthusiastic contributions for the cause of liberating our nation from the clutches of the Buddhist and Sinhalese racists in the new year.

The LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham has announced that the LTTE will not participate in any direct negotiations with the Chandrika Kumaratunga government. Mr. Balasingham, who released the statement from Kilinochchi, said that while its doors are closed for direct negotiations with the Chandrika Kumaratunga government, the LTTE organization would participate in talks held with foreign mediation. Balasingham has also stated that in any such talks we would emphasize that the Sri Lankan Army should vacate our soil, which is has occupied. This is our stance.

Balasingham, who pointed out that the Sri Lankan Army suffered heavy casualties in the recent military operation, also stated that only about 500 LTTE freedom fighters were martyred. He also stated that there is no change in the organizational set up of the Tigers due to this military operation.

Reports from Tamil Nadu say that more than 15,000 people participated in the conference held at the Periyar grounds in Madras yesterday to condemn the massacre of Eelam Tamils. The above reports state that when the Dravida Kazhagam General Secretary Veeramani read out the message of Tamil Eelam National Leader V. Prabhakaran at the conference, the entire gathering gave a standing ovation. The reports further say there is no doubt that leader Prabhakaran's message would have created great enthusiasm among the people as well as the leaders. Several leaders, including former Indian prime minister V.P. Singh, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Leader Karunanidhi, and the Tamil Nadu chief minister sent messages of greetings to yesterday's conference. [passage omitted]

A Sri Lankan Army camp in Battocaloa was subjected to an ambush by the LTTE's rapid assault unit. There has been no report so far about this assault from the LTTE high command.

The longing of the LTTE is for the motherland of Tamil Eelam. Thankyou.

Analysts View LTTE Offer To Resume Peace Talks

BK3112141595 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] leader Velupillai Prabhakaran says that he is willing to resume peace talks with the government through foreign mediation. However, in a statement broadcast over Tiger Radio, he has said that the security forces must first withdraw from Jaffna. The statement was read by the LTTE theoretician Anton Balasingham.

Responding to the statement, political analysts have pointed out that the government's position has already been made very clear. The issue had been addressed by the president on the 8th of this month after Jaffna was being captured in the Operation Riviresa. The president had said that the door was still open to the Tigers if they wanted to enter into an honest dialogue. However, any such negotiations will be launched only on conditions stipulated by the government. The laying down of arms is one condition. The LTTE must also agree to discuss the government's political proposals within a specified timeframe. In addition, they must pledge never to resume their campaign of terror.

Meanwhile, a northern Tamil political party leader says that the Tigers have agreed to resume negotiations because they are militarily weak. Another reason for Prabhakaran's apparent willingness to compromise is the pressure being put on him by the Tamil people of the north.

President Seeks Tamil Help in Rehabilitation

BK3112141195 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga has appealed to Tamil political leaders to

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

help the government in its efforts to resettle displaced people in their homes in the liberated areas. The president was speaking in an interview with the SLBC. She said that the government's political proposals would be tabled at the select committee of the parliament very soon. There would be no major changes to the original proposals. However, certain misunderstandings which had arisen pertaining to issues of foreign aid would be cleared.

Answering a question regarding the demarcation of the proposed region, the president said that there were several options which would be discussed in detail by the select committee. The aim of the political proposals is to allow people to take control of their own affairs. The proposals aim not only at physical security but also the security of the economic and social structures. Every citizen of Sri Lanka should have the right to live in dignity and equality, she said.

Answering another question, the president said that there had been no change in the two-pronged approach in the northeast crisis for the moment. The new year will be crucial for the country. She added that people will be the government, and this support made 1995 a successful year. She expressed the hope that the continued support of the people will help the government face new challenges ahead.

LTTE Militants Reportedly Lose Faith in Leadership

BK3012151095 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 30 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tight security and alert vigilance has helped security forces to nab nearly 90 percent of the suicide bombers who have been assigned by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] hierarchy to carry out certain assignments in Colombo. A senior police officer of the special investigation unit said that in the case of most arrested Tigers, a strange phenomenon or transformation had taken place. They no longer try to swallow cyanide capsules. The Tigers also reveal information at the slightest threat. Official sources attribute this phenomenon to the loss of faith in the leadership after the killing of Mahattaya alias Mahendraraja and after Pottu Amman and Karikalan fell from grace. They are now suspected of being in the Indian intelligence service, the same allegations Prabhakaran made against Mahattaya. Those captured hard-core LTTE men have provided police and security forces with important information leading to the arrest of several suicide bombers, the same source said.

Tamil Tigers Fire Mortars To Mark New Year

BK0101075896 Hong Kong AFP in English 0744 GMT 1 Jan 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Jan 1 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas marked the New Year by storming a police station and fired a barrage of mortar bombs at an army camp in eastern Sri Lanka, raising the overnight death toll to 17, officials said.

Gunmen of the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) attacked the Kelapuliyankulam police post in north-western Sri Lanka Monday and escaped after killing four constables, a police official said.

The LTTE also kept up a prolonged mortar bomb attack against the Valachchenai army camp in the eastern coastal district of Batticaloa but there were no casualties among the troops, a military spokesman here said.

However, he said five soldiers were killed and another five wounded in the northern town of Jaffna late Sunday when their vehicle went over a land mine planted by LTTE guerrillas.

"The vehicle was most probably travelling in an area that had not been fully checked," the spokesman said. The army earlier last month captured Jaffna, the capital of a de facto state run by the LTTE since 1990.

Officials said troops shot dead a member of an LTTE hit squad known as the "pistol group" in the eastern Batticaloa district Monday. Less than 24 hours earlier, the LTTE raided an army base in the same region and killed four soldiers for the loss of three of their own men.

The stepped up violence came even as President Chandrika Kumaratunga in a New Year message urged members of the minority Tamil community to pressure the Tigers to enter peace talks immediately.

Kumaratunga, who is a member of the majority Sinhalese community, said her government would press ahead with political moves to end the protracted ethnic conflict, which has claimed over 50,000 lives since 1972.

"The government alone cannot accomplish this task," she said.

"An important part of extricating themselves from the unfortunate situation faced by them is shouldered by the Tamil people themselves," she said. "They can discharge this responsibility by prevailing upon the LTTE to abandon violence and tread the path of peace immediately."

The president announced last month that the LTTE should make a "substantial surrender of arms" if they

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

are to resume talks. The LTTE abruptly withdrew from talks with the government in April ending a 100-day truce.

For their part, the LTTE maintains that the army should withdraw from the town of Jaffna which was captured from them earlier this month after nearly 50 days of fighting. Some 500 soldiers and nearly 2,000 rebels died in the battle.

LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran said in a message that coincided with his birthday last month that the army should pull out from all areas wrested from his control, and doors to peace will remain "firmly shut" until then.

Troops Beat Off 'Massive' Attack by Tigers

BK0301072496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0721 GMT 3 Jan 96

[Report by Amal Jayasinghe]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO Jan 3 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas mounted a massive attack against an air force camp in eastern Sri Lanka on Wednesday after they conceded to a major setback in the north of the country, officials said.

Gunmen from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) launched the pre-dawn raid against the Pankulam air force training facility near the town of Morawewa, killing one airman and wounding at least 12, officials said.

"The Tigers used a heavy concentration of cadres. They obviously wanted to overrun the camp but failed in their mission," a military spokesman here said, adding that rebel casualties were not immediately known.

Air force reinforcements were sent from the nearby main air base of Morawewa, a military statement said.

Chief military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said the LTTE had escalated their activities in the eastern province following the fall of Jaffna, their northern citadel, last month.

"They are trying to show that their presence in the east is larger than life," Munasinghe said. "They are carrying out mortar attacks and sporadic raids but are unable to make any significant gains."

The latest LTTE attack added to the stepped-up violence in the eastern province from where the military withdrew troops to boost their battle against the Tigers in Jaffna last month.

At least 23 people have died in sporadic violence in the region since the New Year, according to official figures.

The Tigers' supremo, Velupillai Prabhakaran, in a statement issued on Tuesday admitted for the first time that President Chandrika Kumaratunga's military had gained a "historic" success by taking Jaffna, the capital of his de-facto state.

The Chandrika government "has scored historical achievements in the task of destroying the geographical unity and integrity of the Tamil homeland and disrupting the national life of the Tamils," Prabhakaran said in his statement.

Security forces captured the town of Jaffna after nearly 50 days of fighting that also claimed the lives of some 500 soldiers and an estimated 2, 000 Tiger cadres.

Defence sources said the army was conducting search-and-destroy operations in areas of Jaffna brought under government control and the authorities expected thousands of Tamil civilians who fled the fighting to return home.

Tens of thousands of men, women and children have taken shelter in areas of the north still under rebel control. However, the LTTE has said that those who leave their territory will be considered "traitors."

Defence analysts say that the LTTE will be able to carry out hit- and-run attacks against the military only if Tiger cadres can slip back to Jaffna under the cover of civilians.

Shortly after the capture of Jaffna, President Kumaratunga announced that security forces would undertake another offensive to secure a land route to the Jaffna peninsula.

Some 35,000 security personnel in Jaffna are currently being supplied by the tiny air force and the navy because all land access to the region are controlled by the guerrillas.

Officials said that rehabilitation work in Jaffna has already begun in a bid to woo the Tamil civilians back.

The latest round of fighting broke out when the LTTE pulled out of a truce with Kumaratunga in April last year and resumed its guerrilla campaign, which has claimed over 50,000 lives in the past 23 years.

Tamil Rebels Call For Support From India

BK0301052396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 3 Jan 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Tuesday — Sri Lanka's Tamil Tiger guerrillas on Tuesday sought to win back sympathy from fellow Tamils in neighbouring

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

India, and in a statement, Tiger Leader Prabhakran accused unnamed countries of wrongly judging his group to be "separatist terrorists."

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said Tamils in India, which once deployed troops to unsuccessfully disarm the Tigers, should support their struggle for a separate state called Eelam in Sri Lanka's northeast.

In a statement issued in London, Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran made no reference to the 1991 slaying of former Indian premier Rajiv Gandhi, for which he has been blamed, but said Colombo was trying to drive a wedge between his movement and Indian Tamils.

"The Sinhala state has been making desperate efforts to characterise the mode of armed resistance based on the struggle of self-determination as a form of 'terrorism' and 'separatism.'

"These ill conceived notions are being propagated among the Indian people and among the international community," Prabhakaran said in a three-page statement.

He did not name countries that have allegedly misunderstood the LTTE, but Australia, Canada, the European Union and several Asian nations have blamed the Tigers for breaking a truce and resuming fighting.

Prabhakaran for the first time acknowledged defeat at the hands of security forces unleashed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga, who last month captured the northern town of Jaffna, the LTTE's former citadel.

"The Chandrika government has scored historical achievements in the task of destroying the geographical unity and integrity of the Tamil homeland and disrupting the national life of the Tamils," the statement said.

The Tiger supremo said President Kumaratunga had deceived the international community by projecting herself as a peacemaker while pressing ahead with military action against the Tigers.

Prabhakaran said he was forced by circumstances to pull out of a truce with Kumaratunga in April 1995 and resume a guerrilla campaign that has claimed more than 50,000 lives in the past 23 years.

He also referred to pro-LTTE demonstrations in south India last month and said he expected more expressions of support. "This is what the people of Tamil Eelam fervently expect from the people of Tamil Nadu."

Indian authorities cracked down on LTTE facilities after the Tigers in July 1987 rejected a New Delhi-backed peace plan aimed at ending Tamil separatism in Sri Lanka.

Official on Measures To Resolve Ethnic Problem

BK0201113696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 2 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Several important measures have already been taken by the government to identify reasons for the ethnic problem and resolve them. The prime concern of the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs and National Integration is to find a peaceful solution to the ethnic problem.

Additional secretary to the ministry S.M.G. Senaratne says that this could be successfully resolved by solving the current political and economic problems of the country. In an interview with the SLBC, he said that the ethnic problem was caused by political and economic issues and described the past year as a period in which the situation aggravated. The present government clearly understands that it cannot be solved militarily. An important measure taken that year was the efforts to solve the problem through a peace negotiation. However, the government had to weaken the anti-peace separatist group which is against such negotiation. Mr. Senaratne described all these measures as efforts made to resolve the ethnic crisis. In 1995, several vital steps were taken with regard to the language issue. Cabinet approval was granted to recruit more translators, Tamil typists, and Tamil reporters to the state sector.

Government Commitment to Human Rights Stressed

BK0301120296 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 3 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government has put forward well- planned proposals to end the socioeconomic problems of the country. Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar had said that there was a big difference between the PA [People's Alliance] government and the previous government and that the difference is that the president has actually put forward viable proposals.

Minister Kadirgamar, in an interview with ASIA TIMES published in Bangkok recently, has said that the issue of human rights is very important for President Chandrika Kumaratunga and the government. He said that this government inherited a poor human rights record from the previous government. Mr. Kadirgamar pointed out that the president is personally committed to human rights, and therefore they did not find it difficult at all to begin to turn around the human rights record. The foreign minister said also that they decided to bring in a National Human Rights Commission and that the

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

government has set up a Human Rights Task Force to look into human rights violation.

Government Sends 'New Year Bonanza' to Jaffna

BK3112114495 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0659 GMT 31 Dec 95

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, 31 Dec (LANKAPUVATH) — The Sri Lankan government has given the people of Jaffna a new year bonanza.

Additional commissioner general of essential services, Air Commodore (rtd. [retired]) Buddhi Siriwardene told LANKAPUVATH that the freighter "MV Ocean Carrier" set sail from the Colombo harbour Sunday morning, with a shipload of 10,000 gift packs for the people in the liberated areas of Jaffna, including the offshore islands of the northern peninsula, [containing] food and other essential cargo and a large consignment of building materials.

He said the government had also shipped 3,400 metric tons of food such as rice, flour, dhal [bean], sugar, chillies and pulses and 5,100 barrels of kerosene, each containing 210 litres, for the people living in the uncleared areas of Jaffna, through the northeastern port of Point Pedro.

Air Commodore Siriwardene said that 30 to 40 truckloads of food were being sent daily to Kilinochchi on the mainland to feed an estimated 300,000 refugees forced out of their homes in Jaffna city at the point of a gun, by the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam], while adequate essential supplies and building materials were being sent to the Mannar islands for 30,000 refugees who were being resettled.

Giving details of the shipments to the liberated areas, he said that in addition to the 10,000 gift packs which contained rice, milk, sugar, dhal, chillies, condiments, dried fish, garlic, toiletries and cosmetics, the "MV Ocean Carrier" is also carrying 2,000 bags of cement, [and] electrical generators to restore power supply to the Jaffna city, necessary wiring, building material including 100,000 linear feet of number one grade timber, 11,000 square feet of planks, nuts, bolts, building equipment, 5,000 pounds of wire nails, carpentry equipment, emulsion and weathershield paint, enamel, floor paint, corrugated roofing sheets, plywood doors, wooden panelling and several other items.

A group of masons, carpenters, electricians and fitters were already in the Jaffna city and are being assisted by casual labourers from the offshore islands who receive an income of Rs. [rupees] 6,000 to 7,000 monthly.

Three months buffer stocks of food are being maintained both to Kankesanthurai and the offshore islands and regular supplies to Point Pedro.

Mr. Siriwardene said, "MV Lanka Muditha" had just discharged 2,700 tons of rice, flour, dhal, sugar and milk food while the "Mercs Habarana" had unloaded 2,000 tons of food and other cargo sent by NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] to Point Pedro.

This vessel was also transporting 14 pregnant women from Jaffna to Trincomalee for their confinement.

One hundred twenty thousand and five hundred litres of kerosene and 2,200 tons of flour and other essential supplies have also been sent to the uncleared areas, he said.

Sivathasan Appointed as Presidential Adviser

BK0301085596 Colombo LANKAPUVATH in English 0515 GMT 3 Jan 96

["LANKAPUVATH/OANA/POOL" Item]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Colombo, Jan 3 (LANKAPUVATH) — President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga has appointed S. Sivathasan as adviser to the president, plan implementation, from January 1.

He was secretary, Ministry of Livestock Development and Rural Industries, prior to this appointment. Earlier, he served as the state secretary of the Ministry of Tourism from 1990-1994 and secretary to the lands and agriculture in the Northeast Provincial Council, an official release said.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 352
MERRIFIELD, VA.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Its contents in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the U.S. Government.

FBIS collects, translates, disseminates, and analyzes foreign open-source information on behalf of the U.S. Government. Its publications may contain copyrighted material. ***Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.***

— Bracketed indicators before the first sentence of each item describe the way in which the material was processed by FBIS.

— Headlines and all bracketed explanatory notes are supplied by FBIS.

— Personal and place names are rendered in accordance with the decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as adapted by FBIS. Unverified names in radio and television material appear in parentheses and are spelled phonetically; words and phrases in parentheses preceded by a question mark are unclear in the original and deduced from context.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

U.S. Government Customers

For a list of FBIS products, to subscribe to an FBIS publication, or to indicate a change of address contact:

FBIS
P.O. Box 2604
Washington, DC 20013-2604
Telephone: (202) 338-6735
FAX: (703) 733-6042

Non-Government Customers

Subscriptions are available from the National Technical Information Service:

NTIS
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
Telephone: (703) 487-4630
FAX: (703) 321-8547

New subscribers should expect a 30-day delay in receipt of the first issue.